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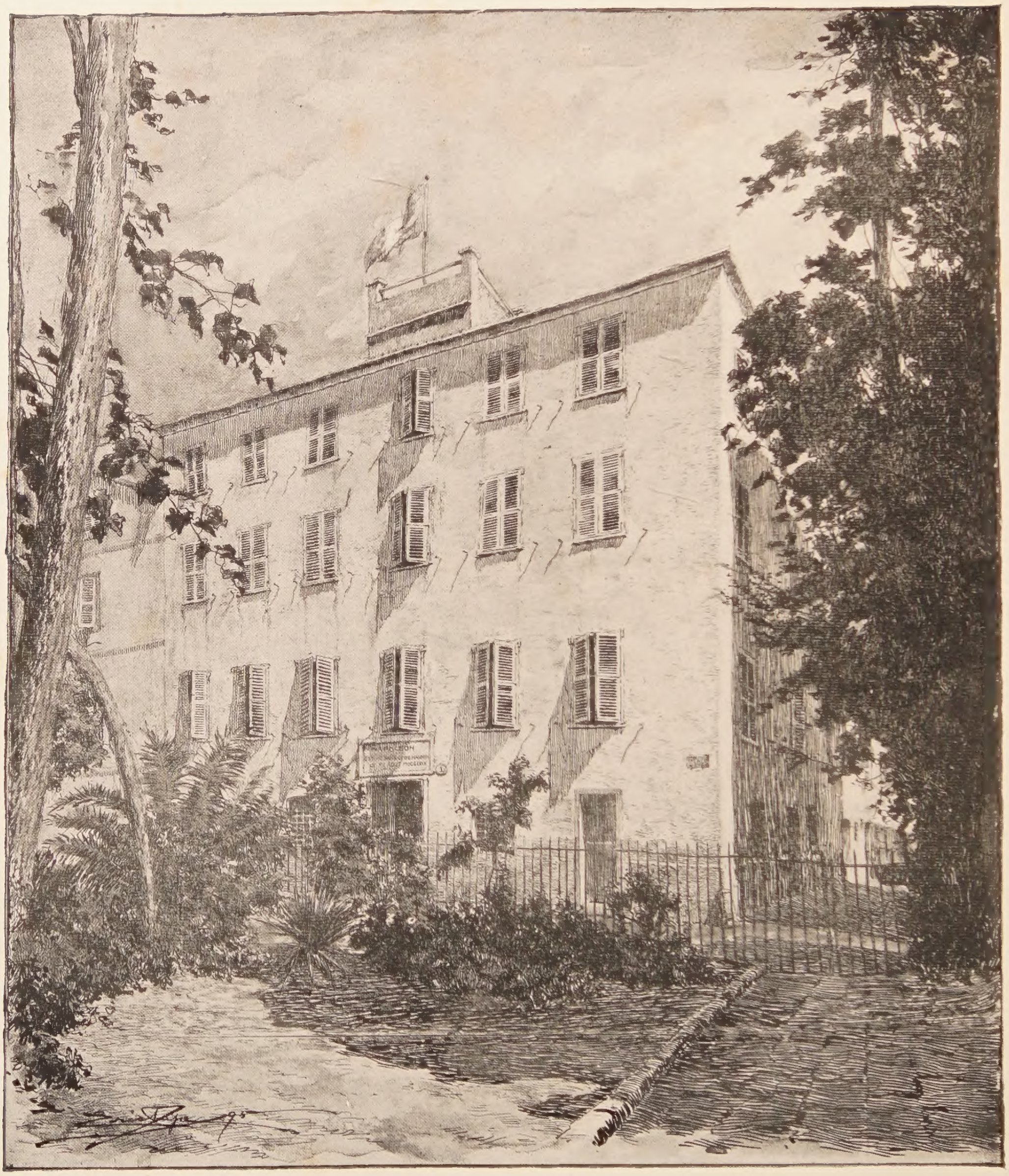

DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

HOUSE IN THE PLACE LETIZIA, AJACCIO, CORSICA, IN WHICH NAPOLEON BONAPARTE WAS BORN

FROM THE DRAWING BY ERIC PAPE

The house is now owned by Ex-Empress Eugénie

LIFE OF
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

BY

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VOLUME I

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PREFACE.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century European society began its effort to get rid of benevolent despotism, so called, and to secure its liberties under forms of constitutional government. The struggle began in France, and spread over the more important lands of continental Europe; its influence was strongly felt in England, and even in the United States. Passing through the phases of constitutional reform, of anarchy, and of military despotism, the movement seemed for a time to have failed, and to outward appearances absolutism was stronger after Waterloo than it had been half a century earlier.

But the force of the revolution was only checked, not spent; and to the awakening of general intelligence, the strengthening of national feeling, and the upbuilding of a sense of common brotherhood among men, produced by the revolutionary struggles of this epoch, Europe owes whatever liberty and free government its peoples now enjoy. At the close of this period national power was no longer in the hands of the aristocracy, nor in those of kings; it had passed into the third social stratum, variously designated as the middle class, the burghers or bourgeoisie, and the third estate, a body of men as little willing to share it with the masses as the kings had been. Nevertheless, the transition once begun could not be stopped, and the advance of manhood suffrage has ever since been proportionate to the capacity of the laboring classes to receive and use it, until now at last, whatever may be the nominal form of government in any civilized land, its stability depends entirely upon the support of the people as a whole. That which is the basis of all government—the power of the purse—has passed into their hands.

This momentous change was of course a turbulent one—the most turbulent in the history of civilization, as it has proved to be the most comprehensive. Consequently its epoch is most interesting, being dramatic in the highest degree, having brought into prominence men and characters which rank among the great of all time, and having exhibited to succeeding generations the most important lessons in the most vivid light. By common consent the eminent man of the time was Napoleon Bonaparte, the revolution queller, the burgher sovereign, the imperial democrat, the supreme captain, the civil reformer, the victim of circumstances which his soaring ambition used but which his unrivaled prowess could not control. Gigantic in his proportions, and satanic in his fate, his was the most tragic figure on the stage of modern history. While the men of his own and the following generation were still alive, it was almost impossible that the truth should be known concerning his actions or his motives; and to fix his place in general history was even less feasible. What he wrote and said about himself was of course animated by a determination to appear in the best light; what others wrote and said has been biased by either devotion or hatred.

Until within a very recent period it seemed that no man could discuss him or his time without manifesting such strong personal feeling as to vitiate his judgment and conclusions. This was partly due to the lack of perspective, but in the main to ignorance of the facts essential to a sober treatment of the theme. In this respect the last quarter of a century has seen a gradual but radical change, for a band of dispassionate scientific scholars have during that time been occupied in the preparation of material for his life without reference to the advocacy of one theory or another concerning his character. European archives, long carefully guarded, have been thrown open; the diplomatic correspondence of the most important periods has been published; family papers have been examined, and numbers of valuable memoirs have been printed. It has therefore been possible to check one account by another, to cancel misrepresentations, to eliminate passion—in short, to establish something like correct outline and accurate detail, at least in regard to what the man actually did. Those hidden secrets of any human mind which we call motives must ever remain to other minds largely a matter of opinion, but a very fair indication of them can be found when once the actual conduct of the actor has been determined.

This investigation has mainly been the work of specialists, and its results have been published in monographs and technical journals; most of these workers, moreover, were continental scholars writing each in his own language. Its results, as a whole, have therefore not been accessible to the general reader in either America or England. It seems highly desirable that they should be made so, and this has been the effort of the writer. At the same time he claims to be an independent investigator in some of the most important portions of the field he covers. His researches have extended over many years, and it has been his privilege to use original materials which, as far as he knows, have not been used by others. At the close of the book will be found a short account of the papers of Bonaparte's boyhood and youth which the author has read, and of the portions of the French and English archives which were generously put at his disposal, together with a short though reasonably complete bibliography of the published books and papers which really have scientific value. The number of volumes concerned with Napoleon and his epoch is enormous; outside of those mentioned very few have any value except as curiosities of literature.

SI QUID NOVISTI RECTIUS ISTIS,
CANDIDUS IMPERTI: SI NON, HIS UTERE MECUM.
HORACE.

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LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

INTRODUCTION

The Revolutionary Epoch in Europe—Corsica as a Center of Interest—Its Geography—The People and their Rulers—Sampiero—Paoli—His Success as a Liberator—His Plan for Alliance with France—The Policy of Choiseul—Paoli's Reputation—Napoleon's Account of Corsica and of Paoli—Rousseau and Corsica.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE was the representative man of the epoch which ushered in the nineteenth century. That period was the most tumultuous and yet the most fruitful in the world's history. But the progress made in it was not altogether direct; rather was it like the advance of a traveler whirled through the spiral tunnels of the St. Gotthard. Flying from the inclemency of the north, he is carried by the ponderous train due southward into the opening. After a time of darkness he emerges into the open air. But at first sight the goal is no nearer; the direction is perhaps reversed, the skies are more forbidding, the chill is more intense. Only after successive ventures of the same kind is the climax reached, the summit passed, and the vision of sunny plains opened to view. Such experiences are more common to the race than to the individual; the muse of history must note and record them with equanimity, with a buoyancy and hopefulness born of large knowledge. The movement of civilization in Europe during the latter portion of the eighteenth century was onward and upward, but it was at times not only laborious and devious, but fruitless in immediate results. We must study the age and the people of any great man if we sincerely desire the truth regarding his strength and weakness, his purposes and inborn tendencies, his failures and successes, the temporary incidents and the lasting, constructive, meritorious achievements of his career; and this is certainly far more true of Napoleon than of any other heroic personage. An affectionate awe has sometimes lifted him to heaven; a spiteful hate has often hurled him down to hell. Every nation, every party, faction, and cabal among his own and other peoples, has judged him from its own standpoint of self-interest and self-justification. Whatever chance there may be of reading the secrets of his life lies rather in a just consideration of the man in relation to his times, about which much is known, than in an attempt at the psychological-dissection of an enigmatical nature, about which little is known, in spite of the fullness of our information. The abundant facts of his career are not facts at all unless considered in the light not only of a great national life, but of a continental movement which was inclusive of all civilization in its day.

There had been in Corsica since the beginning of the sixteenth century an obscure family by the name of Buonaparte. No land and no family could to all outward appearance be further aside from the main channel of European history in the eighteenth century. Yet that isolated land and that unknown family were not merely to be drawn into the movement: they were to illustrate its most characteristic phases. Rousseau endeavored, though unsuccessfully, to forecast a great destiny for Corsica, declaring that it was the only European land capable of movement, of law-making, of peaceful renovation. It was small and remote, but it came near to being an actual exemplification of his favorite and fundamental dogma concerning man in a state of nature, of order as arising from conflict, of government as resting on general consent and mutual agreement among the governed. Toward Corsica, therefore, the eyes of all Europe had long been directed. There, more than elsewhere, the setting of the world-drama seemed complete in miniature, and, in the closing quarter of the eighteenth century, the action was rapidly unfolding a plot of universal interest.

A lofty mountain-ridge divides the island into eastern and western districts. The former is gentler in its slopes, and more fertile. Looking, as it does, toward Italy, it was during the middle ages closely bound in intercourse with that peninsula; richer in its resources than the other part, it was more open to outside influences, and for this reason freer in its institutions. The rugged western division had come more completely under the yoke of feudalism, having close affinity in sympathy, and some relation in blood, with the Greek, Roman, Saracenic, and Teutonic race-elements in France and Spain. The communal administration of the eastern slope, however, prevailed eventually in the western as well, and the differences of origin, wealth, and occupation, though at times the occasion of intestine discord, were as nothing compared with the common characteristics which knit the population of the entire island into one national organization, as much a unit as their insular territory.

The people of this small commonwealth were in the main of Italian blood. Some slight connection with the motherland they still maintained in the relations of commerce, and by the education of their professional men at Italian schools. While a small minority supported themselves as tradesmen or seafarers, the mass of the population was dependent for a livelihood upon agriculture. As a nation they had long ceased to follow the course of general European development. They had been successively the subjects of Greece, Rome, and the Califate, of the German-Roman emperors, and of the republic of Pisa. Their latest ruler was Genoa, which had now degenerated into an untrustworthy oligarchy. United to that state originally by terms which gave the island a "speaker" or advocate in the Genoese senate, and recognized the most cherished habits of a hardy, natural-minded, and primitive people, they had little by little been left a prey to their own faults in order that their unworthy mistress might plead their disorders as an excuse for her tyranny. Agriculture languished, and the minute subdivision of arable land finally rendered its tillage profitless. Among a people who are isolated not only as islanders, but also as mountaineers, old institutions are particularly tenacious of life: that of the vendetta, or blood revenge, with its accompanying clanship, never disappeared from Corsica. In the centuries of Genoese rule the carrying of arms was winked at, quarrels became rife, and often family confederations, embracing a considerable part of the country, were arrayed one against the other in lawless violence. The feudal nobility, few in number, were unrecognized, and failed to cultivate the industrial arts in the security of costly strongholds as their class did elsewhere, while the fairest portions of land not held by them were gradually absorbed by the monasteries, which Genoa favored as likely to render easier the government of a turbulent people. The human animal, however, throve. Of medium stature and powerful mold, with black hair and piercing eyes, with well-formed, agile, and sinewy limbs, endowed with courage and other primitive virtues, the Corsican was everywhere sought as a soldier, and could be found in all the armies of the southern Continental states.

In their periodic struggles against Genoese encroachments and tyranny, the Corsicans had produced a line of national heroes. Sampiero, one of these, had in the sixteenth century incorporated Corsic for a brief hour with the dominions of the French crown, and was regarded as the typical Corsican. Dark, warlike, and revengeful, he had displayed a keen intellect and fine judgment. Simple in his dress and habits, untainted by the luxury then prevalent in the courts of Florence and Paris, at both of which he resided for considerable periods, he could kill his wife without a shudder when she put herself and child into the hands of his enemies to betray him. Hospitable and generous, but untamed and terrible; brusk, dictatorial, and without consideration or compassion; the offspring of his times and his people, he stands the embodiment of primeval energy, physical and mental.

But the greatest of these heroes was also the last—Pascal Paoli. Fitted for his task by birth, by capacity, by superior training, this youth was in 1755 made captain-general of the island, a virtual dictator in his twenty-ninth year. His success was as remarkable as his measures were wise. Elections were regulated so that strong organization was introduced into the loose democratic institutions which had hitherto prevented sufficient unity of action in troubled times. An army was created from the straggling bands of volunteers, and brigandage was suppressed. Wise laws were enacted and enforced—among them one which made the blood-avenger a murderer, instead of a hero as he had been. Moreover, the foundations of a university were laid in the town of Corte, which was the hearthstone of the liberals because it was the natural capital of the west slope, connected by difficult and defensible paths with every cape and bay and intervale of the rocky and broken coast. The Genoese were gradually driven from the interior, and finally they occupied but three harbor towns.

Through skilful diplomacy Paoli created a temporary breach between his oppressors and the Vatican, which, though soon healed, nevertheless enabled him to recover important domains for the state, and prevented the Roman hierarchy from using its enormous influence over the superstitious peasantry utterly to crush the movement for their emancipation. His extreme and enlightened liberalism is admirably shown by his invitation to the Jews, with their industry and steady habits, to settle in Corsica, and to live there in the fullest enjoyment of civil rights, according to the traditions of their faith and the precepts of their law. "Liberty," he said, "knows no creed. Let us leave such distinctions to the Inquisition." Commerce, under these influences, began to thrive. New harbors were made and fortified, while the equipment of a few gunboats for their defense marked the small beginnings of a fleet. The haughty men of Corsica, changing their very nature for a season, began to labor with their hands by the side of their wives and hired assistants; to agriculture, industry, and the arts was given an impulse which promised to be lasting.

The rule of Paoli was not entirely without disturbance. From time to time there occurred rebellious outbreaks of petty factions like that headed by Matra, a disappointed rival. But they were on the whole of little importance. Down to 1765 the advances of the nationalists were steady, their battles being won against enormous odds by the force of their warlike nature, which sought honor above all things, and could, in the words of a medieval chronicle, "endure without a murmur watchings and pains, hunger and cold, in its pursuit—which could even face death without a pang." Finally it became necessary, as the result of unparalleled success in domestic affairs, that a foreign policy should be formulated. Paoli's idea was an offensive and defensive alliance with France on terms recognizing the independence of Corsica, securing an exclusive commercial reciprocity between them, and promising military service with an annual tribute from the island. This idea of France as a protector without administrative power was held by the majority of patriots.

But Choiseul, the minister of foreign affairs under Louis XV., would entertain no such visionary plan. It was clear to every one that the island could no longer be held by its old masters. He had found a facile instrument for the measures necessary to his contemplated seizure of it in the son of a Corsican refugee, that later notorious Buttafuoco, who, carrying water on both shoulders, had ingratiated himself with his father's old friends, while at the same time he had for years been successful as a French official. Corsica was to be seized by France as a sop to the national pride, a slight compensation for the loss of Canada, and he was willing to be the agent. On August sixth, 1764, was signed a provisional agreement between Genoa and France by which the former was to cede for four years all her rights of sovereignty, and the few places she still held in the island, in return for the latter's intervention.

By this time the renown of Paoli had filled all Europe. As a statesman he had skilfully used the European entanglements both of the Bourbon-Hapsburg alliance made in 1756, and of the alliances consequent to the Seven Years' War, for whatever possible advantage might be secured to his people and their cause. As a general he had found profit in defeat, and had organized his little forces to the highest possible efficiency, displaying prudence, fortitude, and capacity. His personal character was blameless, and could be fearlessly set up as a model. He was a convincing orator and a wise legislator. Full of sympathy for his backward compatriots, he knew their weaknesses, and could avoid the consequences, while he recognized at the same time their virtues, and made the fullest use of them. Above all, he had the wide horizon of a philosopher, understanding fully the proportions and relations to each other of epochs and peoples, not striving to uplift Corsica merely in her own interest, but seeking to find in her regeneration a leverage to raise the world to higher things. So gracious, so influential, so far-seeing, so all-embracing was his nature, that Voltaire called him "the lawgiver and the glory of his people," while Frederick the Great dedicated to him a dagger with the inscription, "Libertas, Patria." The shadows in his character were that he was imperious and arbitrary; so overmastering that he trained the Corsicans to seek guidance and protection, thus preventing them from acquiring either personal independence or self-reliance. Awaiting at every step an impulse from their adored leader, growing timid in the moment when decision was imperative, they did not prove equal to their task. Without his people Paoli was still a philosopher; without him they became in succeeding years a byword, and fell supinely into the arms of a less noble subjection. In this regard the comparison between him and Washington, so often instituted, utterly breaks down.

"Corsica," wrote in 1790 a youth destined to lend even greater interest than Paoli to that name—"Corsica has been a prey to the ambition of her neighbors, the victim of their politics and of her own wilfulness. . . . We have seen her take up arms, shake the atrocious power of Genoa, recover her independence, live happily for an instant; but then, pursued by an irresistible fatality, fall again into intolerable disgrace. For twenty-four centuries these are the scenes which recur again and again; the same changes, the same misfortune, but also the same courage, the same resolution, the same boldness. . . . If she trembled for an instant before the feudal hydra, it was only long enough to recognize and destroy it. If, led by a natural feeling, she kissed, like a slave, the chains of Rome, she was not long in breaking them. If, finally, she bowed her head before the Ligurian aristocracy, if irresistible forces kept her twenty years in the despotic grasp of Versailles, forty years of mad warfare astonished Europe, and confounded her enemies."

The same pen wrote of Paoli that by following traditional lines he had not only shown in the constitution he framed for Corsica a historic intuition, but also had found "in his unparalleled activity, in his warm, persuasive eloquence, in his adroit and far-seeing genius," a means to guarantee it against the attacks of wicked foes.

Such was the country in whose fortunes the "age of enlightenment" was so interested. Montesquieu had used its history to illustrate the loss and recovery of privilege and rights; Rousseau had thought the little isle would one day fill all Europe with amazement. When the latter was driven into exile for his utterances, and before his flight to England, Paoli offered him a refuge. Buttafuoco, who represented the opinion that Corsica for its own good must be incorporated with France, and not merely come under her protection, had a few months previously also invited the Genevan prophet to visit the island, and outline a constitution for its people. But the snare was spread in vain. In the letter which with polished phrase declined the task, on the ground of its writer's ill-health, stood the words: "I believe that under their present leader the Corsicans have nothing to fear from Genoa. I believe, moreover, that they have nothing to fear from the troops which France is said to be transporting to their shores. What confirms me in this feeling is that, in spite of the movement, so good a patriot as you seem to be continues in the service of the country which sends them." Paoli was of the same opinion, and remained so until his rude awakening in 1768.

CHAPTER I

THE BONAPARTES IN CORSICA

The French Occupy Corsica — Paoli Deceived — Conquest of Corsica by France — English Intervention Vain — Paoli in England — Introduction of the French Administrative System — Paoli's Policy — Origin of the Bonapartes — Carlo Maria di Buonaparte — Maria Letizia Ramolino — Their Marriage and Naturalization as French Subjects — Their Fortunes — Their Children.

Chap. I
1764–72

THE preliminary occupation of Corsica by the French was ostensibly formal. The process was continued, however, until the formality became a reality, until the fortifications of the seaport towns ceded by Genoa were filled with troops. Then, for the first time, the text of the convention between the two powers was communicated to Paoli. Choiseul explained through his agent that by its first section the King guaranteed the safety and liberty of the Corsican nation, but, no doubt, he forgot to explain the double dealing in the second section whereby in the Italian form the Corsicans were in return to take "all right and proper measures dictated by their sense of justice and natural moderation to secure the glory and interest of the republic of Genoa," while in the French form they were "to yield to the Genoese all 'they' thought necessary to the glory and interests of their republic." Who were the "they"?—the Corsicans or the Genoese? Paoli's eye was fixed on the acknowledgment of Corsican independence; he was hoodwinked completely as to the treachery in this second section, the meaning of which, according to diplomatic usage, was settled by the interpretation the language employed for one form put upon that in which the other was written. Combining the two translations, Italian and French, of the second section, and interpreting one by the other, the Genoese were still the arbiters of Corsican conduct and the promise of liberty contained in the first section was worthless.

Four years passed: apparently they were uneventful, but in reality Choiseul made good use of his time. Through Buttafuoco he was in regular communication with that minority among the Corsicans which desired incorporation. By the skilful manipulation of private funds, and the unstinted use of money, this minority was before long turned into a majority. Toward the close of 1767 Choiseul began to show his hand by demanding absolute possession for France of at least two strong towns. Paoli replied that the demand was unexpected, and required consideration by the people; the answer was that the King of France could not be expected to mingle in Corsican affairs without some advantage for himself. To gain time Paoli chose Buttafuoco as his plenipotentiary, despatched him to Versailles, and thus fell into the very trap so carefully set for him by his opponent. He consented as a compromise that Corsica should join the Bourbon-Hapsburg league. More he could not grant for love of his wild, free Corsicans, and he cherished the secret conviction that, Genoa being no longer able to assert her sovereignty, France would never allow another power to intervene, and so, for the sake of peace, might accept this solution.

But the great French minister was a master of diplomacy and would not yield. In his designs upon Corsica he had little to fear from European opposition. He knew how hampered England was by the strength of parliamentary opposition, and the unrest of her American colonies. The Sardinian monarchy was still weak, and quailed under the jealous eyes of her strong enemies. Austria could not act without breaking the league so essential to her welfare, while the Bourbon courts of Spain and Naples would regard the family aggrandizement with complacency. Moreover, something must be done to save the prestige of France: her American colonial empire was lost; Catherine's brilliant policy, and the subsequent victories of Russia in the Orient, were threatening what remained of French influence in that quarter. Here was a propitious moment to emulate once more the English: to seize a station on the Indian highroad as valuable as Gibraltar or Port Mahon, and to raise again high hopes of recovering, if not the colonial supremacy among nations, at least that equality which the Seven Years' War had destroyed. Without loss of time, therefore, the negotiations were ended, and Buttafuoco was dismissed. On May fifteenth, 1768, the price to be paid having been fixed, a definitive treaty with Genoa was signed whereby she yielded the exercise of sovereignty to France, and Corsica passed finally from her hands. Paoli appealed to the great powers against this arbitrary transfer, but in vain.

The campaign of subjugation opened at once, Buttafuoco, with a few other Corsicans, taking service against his kinsfolk. The soldiers of the Royal Corsican regiment, which was in the French service, and which had been formed under his father's influence, flatly refused to fight their brethren. The French troops already in the island were at once reinforced, but during the first year of the final conflict the advantage was all with the patriots; indeed, there was one substantial victory on October seventh, 1768, that of Borgo, which caused dismay at Versailles. Once more Paoli hoped for intervention, especially that of England, whose liberal feeling would coincide with his interest in keeping Corsica from France. Money and arms were sent from Great Britain, but that was all. This conduct of the British ministry was afterward recalled by France as a precedent for rendering aid to the Americans in their uprising against England.

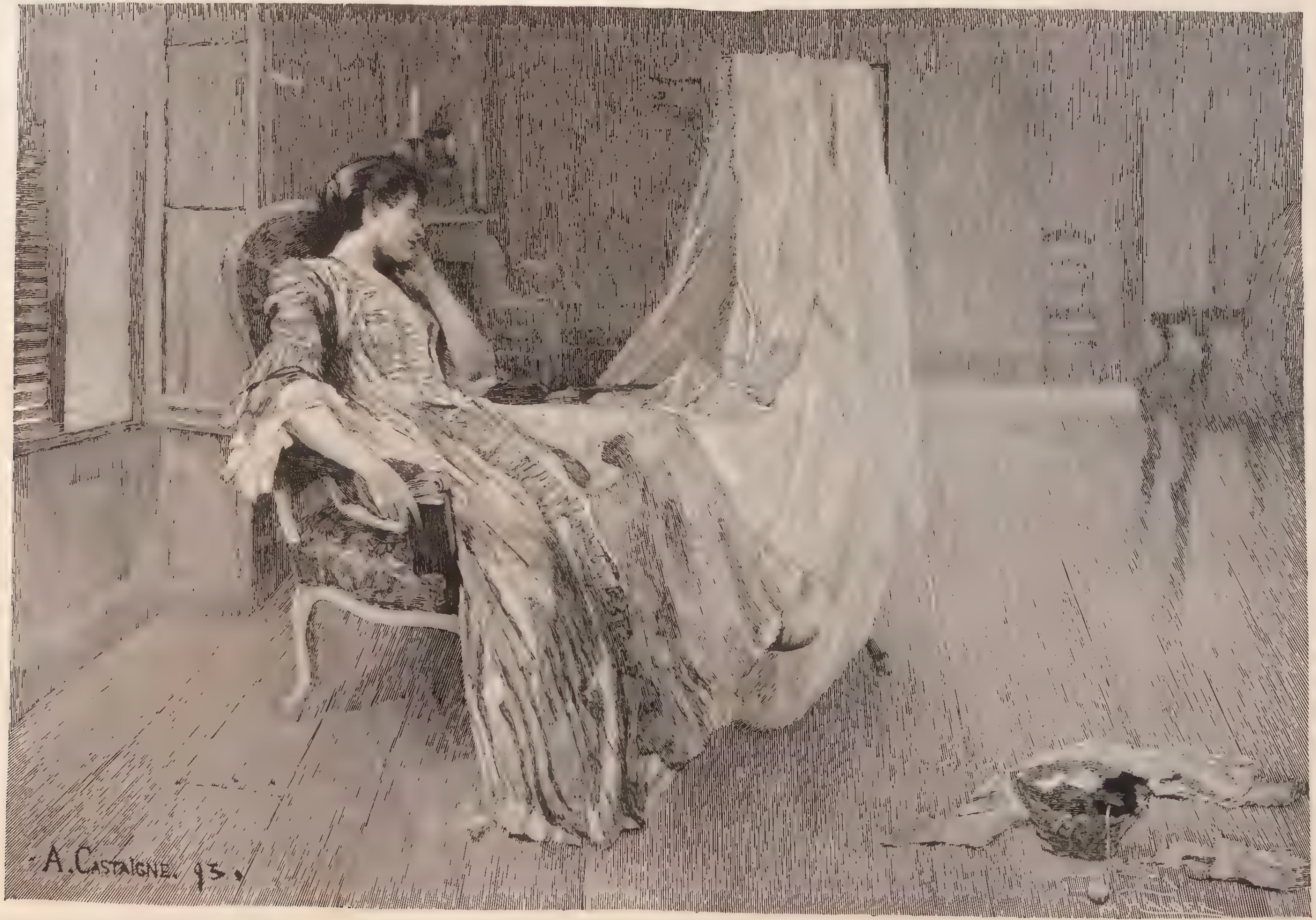
The following spring an army of no less than twenty thousand men was despatched from France to make short and thorough work of the conquest. The previous year of bloody and embittered conflict had gone far to disorganize the patriot army. It was only with the utmost difficulty that the little bands of mountain villagers could be tempted away from the ever more necessary defense of their homes and firesides. Yet in spite of disintegration before such overwhelming odds, and though in want both of the simplest munition and of the very necessities of life, the forces of Paoli continued a fierce and heroic resistance. It was only after months of devastating, heart-rending, hopeless warfare, that their leader, utterly routed in the affair known as the battle of Ponte-Nuovo, finally gave up the desperate cause. Exhausted, and without resources, he would have been an easy prey to the French; but they were too wise to take him prisoner. On June thirteenth, 1769, by their connivance he escaped, with three hundred and forty of his most devoted supporters, on two English vessels, to the mainland. His goal was England. The journey was a long, triumphant procession from Leghorn through Germany and Holland; the honors showered on him by the liberals in the towns through which he passed were such as are generally paid to victory, not to defeat. Kindly received and entertained, he lived for the next thirty years in London, the recipient from the government of twelve hundred pounds a year as a pension.

The year 1770 saw the King of France apparently in peaceful possession of that Corsican sovereignty which he claimed to have bought from Genoa. His administration was soon and easily inaugurated, and there was nowhere any interference from foreign powers. Philanthropic England had provided for Paoli, but would do no more, for she was busy at home with a transformation of her parties. The old Whig party was disintegrating; the new Toryism was steadily asserting itself in the passage of contemptuous measures for oppressing the American colonies. She was, moreover, soon to be so absorbed in her great struggle on both sides of the globe that interest in Corsica and the Mediterranean must remain for a long time in abeyance.

But the establishment of a French administration in the King's new acquisition did not proceed smoothly. The party favorable to incorporation had grown, and, in the rush to side with success, it now probably far outnumbered the old patriots. At the outset they faithfully supported the conquerors in an attempt to retain as much of Paoli's system as possible. But the appointment of a royal governor with a veto over legislation was essential. This of necessity destroyed the old democracy, for, in any case, such an office must create a quasi-aristocracy, and its power would rest not on popular habit and good-will, but on the French soldiery. The situation was frankly recognized, therefore, in a complete reorganization of the old nobility, from among whom a council of twelve was selected to support and countenance the governor. Moreover, the most important offices were given into French hands, while the seat of government was moved from Corte, the highland capital, to the lowland towns of Bastia and Ajaccio. The primeval feud of highlanders and lowlanders was thus rekindled, and in the subsequent agitations the patriots won over by France either lost influence with their followers, or ceased to support the government. Old animosities were everywhere revived and strengthened, until finally the flames burst forth in open rebellion. They were, of course, suppressed, but the work was done with a savage thoroughness the memory of which long survived to prevent the formation in the island of a natural sentiment friendly to the French. Those who professed such a feeling were held in no great esteem.

It was perhaps an error that Paoli did not recognize the indissoluble bonds of race and speech as powerfully drawing Corsica to Italy, disregard the leanings of the democratic mountaineers toward France, sympathize with the fondness of the towns for the motherland, and so use his influence as to confirm the natural alliance between the insular Italians and those of the continent. When we regard Sardinia, however, time seems to have justified him. There is little to choose between the sister islands as regards the backward condition of both; but the French department of Corsica is, at least, no less advanced than the Italian province of Sardinia. The final amalgamation of Paoli's country with France, which was in a measure the result of his leaning toward a French protectorate, accomplished one end, however, which has rendered it impossible to separate her from the course of great events, from the number of the mighty agents in history. Curiously longing in his exile for a second Sampiero to have wielded the physical power while he himself should have become a Lycurgus, Paoli's wish was to be half-way fulfilled in that a warrior greater than Sampiero was about to be born in Corsica, one who should, by the very union so long resisted, come, as the master of France, to wield a power strong enough to shatter both tyrannies and dynasties, thus clearing the ground for a lawgiving closely related to Paoli's own just and wise conceptions of legislation.

This scion was to come from the stock which at first bore the name of Bonaparte, or, as the heraldic etymology later spelled it, Buonaparte. There were branches of the same stock, or, at least, of the same name, in many other parts of Italy. Whatever the origin of the Corsican Buonapartes, it was neither royal from the twin brother of Louis XIV., thought to be the Iron Mask, nor imperial from the Julian gens, nor Greek, nor Saracen, nor, in short, anything which later-invented and lying genealogies declared it to be. But it was almost certainly Italian, and probably patrician, for in 1780 a Tuscan gentleman of the name devised a scanty estate to his distant Corsican kinsman. The earliest home of the family was Florence; later they removed for political reasons to Sarzana, in Tuscany, where for generations men of that name exercised the profession of advocates. They were persons of some local consequence in their latest seats, partly because of their Italian connections, partly in their substantial possessions of land, and partly through the official positions which they held in the city of Ajaccio. Their sympathies as lowlanders and townspeople were with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THE INFANT NAPOLEON IN THE ROOM OF HIS BIRTH

the country of their origin and with Genoa. During the last years of the sixteenth century that republic authorized Jerome, then head of the family, to prefix the distinguishing particle "di" to his name; but the Italian custom was averse to its use, which was not revived until later, and then only for a short time.

Nearly two centuries passed before the grand duke of Tuscany issued formal patents in 1757, attesting the Buonaparte nobility. It was Joseph, the grandsire of Napoleon, who received them; soon afterward he announced that the coat-armor of the family was "la couronne de compte, l'ecusson fendu par deux barres et deux étoilles, avec les lettres B. P. qui signifient Buona Parte, le fond des armes rougeâtres, les barres et les étoilles bleu, les ombrements et la couronne jaune!" Translated as literally as such doubtful language and construction can be, this signifies: "A count's coronet, the escutcheon with two bends sinister and two stars, bearing the letters B. P., which signify Buonaparte, the field of the arms red, the bends and stars blue, the letters and coronet yellow!" In heraldic parlance this would be: Gules, two bends sinister between two estoiles azure charged with B. P. for Buona Parte, or; surmounted by a count's coronet of the last.

In 1759 the same sovereign granted further the title of patrician. Charles, the son of Joseph, received a similar grant from the Archbishop of Pisa in 1769. These facts have a substantial historical value, since by reason of them the family was recognized as noble in 1771 by the French authorities, and as a consequence the most illustrious scion of the stem became, eight years later, the ward of a France which was still monarchical. Reading between the lines of such a narrative, it appears as if the short-lived family of Corsican lawyers had some difficulty in preserving an influence proportionate to their descent, and therefore sought to draw all the strength they could from a bygone grandeur, easily forgotten by their neighbors in their moderate circumstances at a later day.

No task had lain nearer to Paoli's heart than to unite in one nation the two factions into which he found his people divided. Accordingly, when Carlo Maria di Buonaparte, the single stem on which the consequential lowland family depended for continuance, appeared to pursue his studies at Corte, the stranger was received with flattering kindness, and probably, as one account has it, was appointed to a post of emolument and honor as Paoli's private secretary. The new patrician, according to a custom common among Corsicans of his class, determined to take his degree at Pisa, and in November, 1769, he was made doctor of laws by that university. Many pleasant and probably true anecdotes have been told to illustrate the good-fellowship of the young advocate among his comrades while a student. There are likewise narratives of his persuasive eloquence and of his influence as a patriot, but these sound mythical. In short, an organized effort of sycophantic admirers, who would, if possible, illuminate the whole family in order to heighten Napoleon's renown, has invented fables and distorted facts to such a degree that the entire truth as to Charles's character is hard to discern.

Certain undisputed facts, however, throw a strong light upon Napoleon's father. His people were proud and poor; he endured the hardships of poverty with equanimity. Strengthening what little influence he could muster, he at first appears ambitious, and has himself described in his doctor's diploma as a patrician of Florence, San Miniato, and Ajaccio. On the other hand, with no apparent regard for his personal advancement by marriage, he followed his own inclination, and in 1764, at the age of eighteen, gallantly wedded a beautiful child of fifteen, Maria Letizia Ramolino. Her descent, though remotely noble, was far inferior to that of her husband, but her fortune was equal, if not superior, to his. Although well born, she was of peasant nature to the last day of her long life—hardy, unsentimental, frugal, and sometimes unscrupulous. Yet for all that, the hospitality of her little home in Ajaccio was lavish and famous. Among the many guests who were regularly entertained there was Marbeuf, commander in Corsica of the first army of occupation. There was long afterward a malicious tradition that the French general was Napoleon's father. The morals of Letizia di Buonaparte, like those of her conspicuous children, have been bitterly assailed, but her own good name, at least, has always been vindicated. The evident motive of the story sufficiently refutes such an aspersion as it contains. Of the bride's extraordinary beauty there has never been a doubt. She was a woman of heroic mold, like Juno in her majesty, unmoved in prosperity, undaunted in adversity. It was probably to his mother, whom he strongly resembled in childhood, that the famous son owed his tremendous, even gigantic, physical endurance.

After their marriage the youthful pair resided in Corte, waiting until events should permit their return to Ajaccio. Naturally of an indolent temperament, the husband, though he had at first been drawn into the daring enterprises of Paoli, and had displayed a momentary enthusiasm, was now, as he had been for more than a year, weary of them. At the head of a body of men of his own rank, he finally withdrew to Monte Rotondo, and on May twenty-third, 1769, a few weeks before Paoli's flight, the band made formal submission to Vaux, commander of the second army of occupation, explaining through Buonaparte that the national leader had misled them by promises of aid which never came, and that, recognizing the impossibility of further resistance, they were anxious to accept the new government, to return to their homes, and to resume the peaceful conduct of their affairs. It was this precipitate naturalization of the father as a French subject which made his great son a Frenchman. Less than three months afterward, on August fifteenth, the fourth child, Napoleone di Buonaparte, was born in Ajaccio.

The resources of the Buonapartes, as they still wrote themselves, were small, although their family and expectations were large. An only child, and her mother having married a second time, Lætitia, to use the French form, inherited her father's home and his vineyards. Her stepfather had been a Swiss mercenary in the pay of Genoa. In order to secure the woman of his choice he became a Roman Catholic, and was the father of Mme. di Buonaparte's half-brother, Joseph Fesch. Charles himself was the owner of lands in the interior, but they were heavily mortgaged, and he could contribute little to the support of his family. His maternal uncle, a wealthy landlord, had died childless, leaving his domains to the Jesuits, and they had promptly entered into possession. According to the terms of his grandfather's will, the bequest was void, for the fortune was to fall in such a case to Charles's mother, and on her death to Charles himself. Joseph, his father, had wasted many years and most of his fortune in weary litigation to recover the property. Nothing daunted, Charles settled down to pursue the same phantom, virtually depending for a livelihood on his wife's patrimony. He became an officer of the highest court as assessor, and was made in 1772 a member, and later a deputy, of the council of Corsican nobles.

The sturdy mother was most prolific. Her eldest child, born in 1765, was a son who died in infancy; in 1767 was born a daughter, Maria-Anna, destined to the same fate; in 1768 a son, known later as Joseph, but baptized as Nabulione; in 1769 the great son, Napoleone. Nine other children were the fruit of the same wedlock, and six of them—three sons, Lucien, Louis, and Jérôme, and three daughters, Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline—survived to share their brother's greatness. Charles himself, like his short-lived ancestors,—of whom five had died within a century,—scarcely reached middle age, dying in his thirty-ninth year. Lætitia, like the stout Corsican that she was, lived to the ripe age of eighty-six in the full enjoyment of her faculties, known to the world as Madame Mère, a sobriquet devised by her great son to distinguish her as the mother of the Napoleons.

CHAPTER II

NAPOLEON'S BIRTH AND INFANCY

Birth of Nabulione or Joseph—Date of Napoleon's Birth—The Name Napoleon—Corsican Conditions as Influencing Napoleon's Character—His Early Education—Influenced by Traditions Concerning Paoli—Charles de Buonaparte as a Suitor for Court Favor—Napoleon Appointed to Brienne—His Efforts to Learn French at Autun—Development of His Character—His Father Delegate of the Corsican Nobility at Versailles.

Chap. II
1768–79

THE trials of poverty made the Buonapartes so clever and adroit that suspicions of shiftiness in small matters were developed later on, and these led to an over-close scrutiny of their acts. The opinion has not yet disappeared among reputable authorities that Nabulione and Napoleone were one and the same, born on January seventh, 1768, Joseph being really the younger, born on the date assigned to his distinguished brother. The earliest documentary evidence consists of two papers, one in the archives of the French War Department, one in those of Ajaccio. The former is dated 1782, and testifies to the birth of Nabulione on January seventh, 1768, and to his baptism on January eighth; the latter is the copy of an original paper which declares the birth, on January seventh, of Joseph Nabulion. Neither is decisive, but the addition of Joseph, with the use of the two French forms for the name in the second, destroys much of its value, and leaves the weight of authority with the former. The reasonableness of the suspicion seems to be heightened by the fact that the certificate of Napoleon's marriage gives the date of his birth as February eighth, 1768. Moreover, in the marriage contract of Joseph, witnesses testify to his having been born at Ajaccio, not at Corte.

But there are facts of greater weight on the other side. In the first place, the documentary evidence is itself of equal value, for the archives of the French War Department also contain an extract from the one original baptismal certificate, which is dated July twenty-first, 1771, the day of the baptism, and gives the date of Napoleone's birth as August fifteenth, 1769. Charles's application for the appointment of his two eldest boys to Brienne has also been found, and it contains, according to regulation, still another copy from the original certificate, which is dated June twenty-third, 1776, and also gives what must be accepted as the correct date. This explodes the story that Napoleon's age was falsified by his father in order to obtain admittance for him to the military school. The application was made in 1776 for both boys, so as to secure admission for each before the end of his tenth year. It was the delay of the authorities in granting the request which, after the lapse of three years or more, made Joseph ineligible. The father could have had no motive in 1776 to perpetrate a fraud, and after that date it was impossible, for the papers were not in his hands; moreover, the Minister of War wrote in 1778 that the name of the elder Buonaparte boy had already been withdrawn. That charge was made during Napoleon's lifetime. His brother Joseph positively denied it, and asserted the fact as it is now substantially proved to be; Bourrienne, who had known his Emperor as a child of nine, was of like opinion; Napoleon himself, in an autograph paper still existing, and written in the handwriting of his youth, thrice gives the date of his birth as August fifteenth, 1769. If the substitution occurred, it must have been in early infancy. In the walk of life to which the Buonapartes belonged, the fixity of names was not as rigid then as it later became. There were three Maria-Annas in the family first and last, one of whom was afterward called Elisa. Besides, we know why Napoleon at marriage sought to appear older than he was, and Joseph's contract was written when the misstatement in it was valuable as making him appear thoroughly French.

As to the given name Napoleon, there is a curious though unimportant confusion. We have already seen the forms Nabulione, Nabulion, Napoleone, Napoleon. Contemporary documents give also the form Napoloeone, and his marriage certificate uses Napolione. On the Vendôme Column stands Napolio. Imp., which might be read either Napolioni Imperatori or Napolio Imperatori. In either case we have indications of a new form, Napolion or Napolius. The latter, which was more probably intended, would seem to be an attempt to recall Neopolus, a recognized saint's name. The absence of the name Napoleon from the calendar of the Latin Church was considered a serious reproach to its bearer by those who hated him, and their incessant taunts stung him. In after years he had the matter remedied, and the French Catholics for a time celebrated a St. Napoleon's day with proper ceremonies, among which was the singing of a hymn composed to celebrate the power and virtues of the holy man for whom it was named. The irreverent school-boys of Autun and Brienne gave the nickname "straw nose"—*paille-au-nez*—to both the brothers. The pronunciation, therefore, was probably as uncertain as the form, Napaille-au-nez being probably a distortion of Napouilloné. The chameleon-like character of the name corresponds exactly to the chameleon-like character of the times, the man, and the lands of his birth and his adoption. The Corsican noble and French royalist was Napoleone de Buonaparté; the Corsican republican and patriot was Napoléone Buonaparté; the French republican, Napoléon Buonaparte; the victorious general, Bonaparte; the emperor, Napoléon. There was likewise a change in this person's handwriting analogous to the change in his nationality and opinions. It was probably to conceal a most defective knowledge of French that the adoptive Frenchman, republican, consul, and emperor abandoned the fairly legible hand of his youth, and recurred to the atrocious one of his childhood, continuing always to use it after his definite choice of a country.

Stormy indeed were his nation and his birthtime. He himself said: "I was born while my country was dying. Thirty thousand French, vomited on our shores, drowning the throne of liberty in waves of blood—such was the horrid sight which first met my view. The cries of the dying, the groans of the oppressed, tears of despair, surrounded my cradle at my birth."

Such were the words he used in 1789, while still a Corsican in feeling, when addressing Paoli. They strain chronology for the sake of rhetorical effect, but they truthfully picture the circumstances under which he was conceived. There is a late myth which recalls in detail that when the pains of parturition seized his mother she was at mass, and that she reached her chamber just in time to deposit, on a piece of embroidery representing the young Achilles, the prodigy bursting so impetuously into the world. By the man himself his nature was always represented as the product of his hour, and this he considered a sufficient excuse for any line of conduct he chose to follow. When in banishment at Longwood, and on his death-bed, he recalled the circumstances of his childhood in conversations with the attendant physician, a Corsican like himself: "Nothing awed me; I feared no one. I struck one, I scratched another, I was a terror to everybody. It was my brother Joseph with whom I had most to do; he was beaten, bitten, scolded, and I had put the blame on him almost before he knew what he was about; was telling tales about him almost before he could collect his wits. I had to be quick: my mama Letizia would have restrained my warlike temper; she would not have put up with my defiant petulance. Her tenderness was severe, meting out punishment and reward with equal justice; merit and demerit, she took both into account."

Of his earliest education he said at the same time: "Like everything else in Corsica, it was pitiful." Lucien Buonaparte, his great-uncle, was a canon, a man of substance with an income of five thousand livres a year, and of some education — sufficient, at least, to permit his further ecclesiastical advancement. "Uncle" Fesch, whose father had received the good education of a Protestant Swiss boy, and had in turn imparted his knowledge to his own son, was the friend and older playmate of the turbulent little Buonaparte. The child learned a few notions of Bible history, and, doubtless, also the catechism, from the canon; by his eleven-year-old uncle he was taught his alphabet. In his sixth year he was sent to a dame's school. The boys teased him because his stockings were always down over his shoes, and for his devotion to the girls, one named Giacominetta especially. He met their taunts with blows, using sticks, bricks, or any handy weapon. According to his own story, he was fearless in the face of superior numbers, however large. His mother declared that he was a perfect imp of a child. Of French he knew not a word; he had lessons at school in his mother tongue, which he learned to read under the instruction of the Abbé Recco.

This scanty information is all we possess. With slight additions from other sources it is substantially Napoleon's own account of himself in that last period of self-examination when, to him, as to other men, consistency seems the highest virtue. He was, doubtless, striving to compound with his conscience by emphasizing the adage that the child is father to the man—that he was born what he had always been.

In 1775 Corsica had been for six years in the possession of France, and on the surface all was fair. There was, however, a little remnant of faithful patriots left in the island, with whom Paoli and his banished friends were still in communication. The royal cabinet, seeking to remove every possible danger of disturbance, even so slight a one as lay in the disaffection of the few scattered nationalists, and in the unconcealed distrust which these felt for their conforming fellow-citizens, began a little later to make advances, in order, if possible, to win at least Paoli's neutrality, if not his acquiescence. All in vain: the exile was not to be moved. From time to time, therefore, there was throughout Corsica a noticeable flow in the tide of patriotism. There are indications that the child Napoleon was conscious of this influence, listening probably with intense interest to the sympathetic tales about Paoli and his struggles for liberty which were still told among the people.

As to Charles de Buonaparte, some things he had hoped for from annexation were secured. His nobility and official rank were safe; he was in a fair way to reach even higher distinction. But what were honors without wealth? The domestic means were constantly growing smaller, while expenditures increased with the accumulating dignities and ever-growing family. He had made his humble submission to the French; his reception had been warm and graceful. The authorities knew of his pretensions to the estates of his ancestors. The Jesuits had been disgraced and banished, but the property had not been restored to him; on the contrary, the buildings had been converted into school-houses, and the revenues turned into various channels. Years had passed, and it was evident that his suit was hopeless. How could substantial advantage for the part he had taken be secured from the King? His friends, General Marbeuf in particular, were of the opinion that he could profit to a certain extent at least by securing for his children an education at the expense of the state. The first steps were soon taken, and in 1776 the formal supplication for the two eldest boys was forwarded to Paris. Immediately the proof of four noble descents was demanded. The movement of letters was slow, that of officials even slower, and the delays in securing copies and authentications of the various documents were long and vexatious.

Meantime Choiseul had been disgraced, and on May tenth, 1774, the old King had died; Louis XVI. now reigned. The inertia which marked the brilliant decadence of the Bourbon monarchy was finally overcome. The new social forces were partly emancipated. Facts were examined, and their significance considered. Bankruptcy was no longer a threatening phantom, but a menacing reality of the most serious nature. Retrenchment and reform were the order of the day. Necker was trying his promising schemes. There was, among them, one for a body consisting of delegates from each of the three estates,—nobles, ecclesiastics, and burgesses,—to assist in deciding that troublesome question, the regulation of imposts. The Swiss financier hoped to destroy in this way the sullen, defiant influence of the royal intendants. In Corsica the governor and the intendant both thought themselves too shrewd to be trapped, securing the appointment from each of the Corsican estates of men who were believed by them to be their humble servants. The needy suitor, Charles de Buonaparte, was to be the delegate at Versailles of the nobility. They thought they knew this man in particular, but he was to prove as malleable in France as he had been in Corsica. Though nearly penniless, his vanity was tickled, and he accepted the mission, setting out in 1778 by way of Tuscany with his two sons Joseph and Napoleon. With them were Joseph Fesch, appointed to the seminary at Aix, and Varesa, Lætitia's cousin, who was to be sub-deacon at Autun. Joseph and Napoleon both asserted in later life that during their sojourn in Florence the grand duke gave his friend, the father, a letter to his sister, Marie Antoinette. As the grand duke was at that time in Vienna, the whole account they give of the journey is probably untrue. It was really to Marbeuf's influence that the final partial success of Charles de Buonaparte's supplication was due; to the general's nephew, bishop of Autun, Joseph, now too old to be received in the royal military school, and later Lucien, were both sent, the former to be educated as a priest. It was probably Marbeuf's influence also, combined with a desire to conciliate Corsica, which caused the heralds' office finally to accept the documents attesting the Buonapartes' nobility. On April twenty-third, 1779, Napoleon left Autun, having been admitted to Brienne, and it was to Marbeuf that in later life he attributed his appointment. After spending three weeks with a school friend, he entered upon his duties about the middle of May.

On New Year's day, 1779, the Buonapartes had arrived at Autun, and for three months the young Napoleone had been trained in the use of French. Prodigy as he was, his progress had been slow, the difficulties of that elegant and polished tongue having scarcely been reached; so that it was with a most imperfect knowledge of their language, and a sadly defective pronunciation, that he made his appearance among his future schoolmates at Brienne. There were one hundred and fifty of them, although the arrangement and theory of the institution had contemplated only one hundred and twenty, of whom half were to be foundationers. The instructors were Minim priests, and the life was as severe as it could be made with such a clientage under half-educated and inexperienced monks. In spite of all efforts to the contrary, however, the place had an air of elegance; there was a certain school-boy display proportionate to the pocket-money of the young nobles, and a very keen discrimination among themselves as to rank, social quality, and relative importance. Those familiar with the ruthlessness of boys in their treatment of one another can easily conceive what was the reception of the newcomer, whose nobility was unknown and unrecognized in France, and whose means were of the scantiest.

It appears that the journey from Corsica through Florence and Marseilles had already wrought a marvelous change in the boy. Napoleon's teacher at Autun, the Abbé Chardon, described his pupil as having brought with him a sober, thoughtful character. He played with no one, and took his walks alone. The boys of Autun, says the same authority, on one occasion brought the sweeping charge of cowardice against all inhabitants of Corsica, in order to exasperate him. "If they [the French] had been but four to one," was the calm, phlegmatic answer of the ten-year-old boy, "they would never have taken Corsica; but when they were ten to one . . ." "But you had a fine general — Paoli," interrupted the narrator. "Yes, sire," was the reply, uttered with an air of discontent, and in the very embodiment of ambition; "I should much like to emulate him." The description of the untamed faun as he then appeared is not flattering: his complexion sallow, his hair stiff, his figure slight, his expression lusterless, his manner insignificant. Moreover, he spoke broken French with an Italian accent.

During his son's preparatory studies at Autun the father had been busy at Versailles with further supplications—among them one for

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a supplement from the royal purse to his scanty pay as delegate, and another for the speedy settlement of his now notorious claim. The former of the two was granted not merely to M. de Buonaparte, but to his two colleagues, in view of the "excellent behavior" — otherwise subserviency — of the Corsican delegation at Versailles. When, in addition, the certificate of Napoleon's appointment finally arrived, and the father set out to place his son at school, with a proper outfit, he had no difficulty in securing sufficient money to meet his immediate and pressing necessities; but more was not forthcoming.

CHAPTER III

NAPOLEON'S SCHOOL-DAYS

MILITARY SCHOOLS IN FRANCE — NAPOLEON'S INITIATION INTO THE LIFE OF BRIENNE — HIS POWERFUL FRIENDS — HIS READING AND OTHER AVOCATIONS — HIS STUDIES — HIS CONDUCT AND SCHOLARSHIP — THE CHANGE IN HIS LIFE PLAN — HIS INFLUENCE IN HIS FAMILY — HIS CHOICE OF THE ARTILLERY SERVICE.

IT was an old charge that the sons of poor gentlemen destined to be artillery officers were bred like princes. Brienne, with nine other similar academies, had been but recently founded as a protest against the luxury which had reigned in the military schools at Paris and La Flèche. Both the latter were closed for a time because they could not be reformed; that at Paris was afterward reopened as a finishing-school. Various religious orders were put in charge of the new colleges, with instructions to secure simplicity of life and manners, the formation of character, and other desirable benefits, each one in its own way in the school or schools intrusted to it. The result so far had been a failure; there were simply not ten first-rate instructors to be found in France for the new positions in each branch; the instruction was therefore much impaired, and with it declined the right standards of conduct, while the old notions of hollow courtliness and conventional behavior flourished as never before. Money and polished manners, therefore, were the things most needed to secure kind treatment for an entering boy. These were exactly what the young foundation scholar from Corsica did not possess. The ignorant and unworldly Minim fathers could neither foresee nor, if they had foreseen, alleviate the miseries incident to his arrival under such conditions.

At Autun Napoleon had at least enjoyed the sympathetic society of his mild and unemotional brother, whose easy-going nature could smooth many a rough place. He was now entirely without companionship, resenting from the outset both the ill-natured attacks and the playful personal allusions through which boys so often begin, and with time knit ever more firmly, their inexplicable friendships. To the taunts about Corsica which began immediately he answered coldly, "I hope one day to be in a position to give Corsica her liberty." Entering on a certain occasion a room in which unknown to him there hung a portrait of the hated Choiseul, he started back as he caught sight of it and burst into bitter revilings; for this he was compelled to undergo chastisement. Brienne was a nursery for the qualities first developed at Autun. Dark, solitary, and untamed, the new scholar assumed the indifference of wounded vanity, despised all pastimes, and found delight either in books or in scornful exasperation of his comrades when compelled to associate with them. There were quarrels and bitter fights, in which the Ishmaelite's hand was against every other. Sometimes in a kind of frenzy he inflicted serious wounds on his fellow-students. At length even the teachers mocked him, and deprived him of his position as captain in the school battalion.

The climax of the miserable business was reached when to a taunt that his ancestry was nothing, "his father a wretched tipstaff," Napoleon replied by challenging his tormentor to fight a duel. For this offense he was put in confinement while the instigator went unpunished. It was by the intervention of Marbeuf that his young friend was at length released. Bruised and wounded in spirit, the boy would gladly have shaken the dust of Brienne from his feet, but necessity forbade. Either from some direct communication Napoleon had with his protector, or through a dramatic but unauthenticated letter purporting to have been written by him to his friends in Corsica and still in existence, Marbeuf learned that the chiefest cause of all the bitterness was the inequality between the pocket allowances of the young French nobles and that of the young Corsican. The kindly general displayed the liberality of a family friend, and gladly increased the boy's gratuity, administering at the same time a smart rebuke to him for his readiness to take offense. He is likewise thought to have introduced his young charge to Mme. Loménie de Brienne, whose mansion was near by. This noble woman, it is asserted, became a second mother to the lonely child: his vacations and holidays were passed with her; her tenderness softened his rude nature, the more so as she knew the value of tips to a school-boy, and administered them liberally though judiciously.

Nor was this the only light among the shadows in the picture of these early school-days. Each of the hundred and fifty pupils had a small garden spot assigned to him. Buonaparte developed a passion for his own, and, annexing by force the neglected plots of his two neighbors, created for himself a retreat, the solitude of which was insured by a thick and lofty hedge planted about it. To this citadel, the sanctity of which he protected with a fury at times half insane, he was wont to retire in the fair weather of all seasons, with whatever books he could secure. In the companionship of these he passed happy, pleasant, and fruitful hours. His youthful patriotism had been intensified by the hatred he now felt for French school-boys, and through them for France. "I can never forgive my father," he once cried, "for the share he had in uniting Corsica to France." Paoli became his hero, and the favorite subjects of his reading were the mighty deeds of men and peoples, especially in antiquity. Such matter he found abundant in Plutarch's "Lives." Moreover, his degradation by the school authorities at once created a sentiment in his favor among his companions, which not only counteracted the effect of the punishment, but gave him a sort of compensating leadership in their games. The well-known episode of the snow forts illustrates the bent of his nature. When driven by storms to abandon his garden haunt, and to associate in the public hall with the other boys, he often instituted sports in which opposing camps of Greeks and Persians, or of Romans and Carthaginians, fought until the uproar brought down the authorities to end the conflict. On one occasion he proposed the game, common enough elsewhere, but not so familiar then in France, of building snow forts, of storming and defending them, and of fighting with snowballs as weapons. The proposition was accepted, and the preparations were made under his direction with scientific zeal; the intrenchments, forts, bastions, and redoubts were the admiration of the neighborhood. For weeks the mimic warfare went on, Buonaparte, always in command, being sometimes the besieger and as often the besieged. Such was the aptitude, such the resources, and such the commanding power which he showed in either rôle, that the winter was always remembered in the annals of the school.

It is a trite remark that diamonds can be polished only by diamond dust. Whatever the rude processes were to which this rude nature was subjected, the result was remarkable. Latin he disliked, and treated with disdainful neglect. His particular aptitudes were for mathematics and for history, in which he made fair progress. In all directions, however, he was quick in his perceptions; the rapid maturing of his mind by reading and reflection was evident to all his associates, hostile though they were. The most convincing evidence of the fact will be found in a letter written, probably in 1784, when he was fifteen years old, to an uncle,—possibly Fesch,—concerning family matters. His brother Joseph had gone to Autun to be educated for the Church, his sister (Maria-Anna) Elisa had been appointed on the royal foundation at Saint-Cyr, and Lucien was, if possible, to be placed like Napoleon at Brienne. The two younger children had already accompanied their father on his regular journey to Versailles, and Lucien was now installed either in the school itself or near by, to be in readiness for any vacancy. All was well with the rest, except that Joseph was uneasy, and wished to become an officer too. The tone of Napoleon is extraordinary. Opening with a little sketch of Lucien such as any elder brother might draw of a younger, he proceeds to an analysis of Joseph both searching and thorough, explaining with fullness of reasoning and illustration how much more advantageous from the worldly point of view both for Joseph and for the family would be a career in the Church: "the bishop of Autun would bestow a fat living on him, and he was sure of himself becoming a bishop." As an *obiter dictum* it contains a curious expression of contempt for infantry as an arm, the origin of which feeling is by no means clear. There is an utter absence of loose talk, or of enthusiasm, and no allusion to principle or sentiment. It is the work of a cold, calculating, and dictatorial nature. There is a poetical quotation in it, very apt, but very badly spelled; and while the expression throughout is fair, it is by no means what might be expected from a person capable of such thought, who had been studying French for three years, and using it exclusively in daily life.

In August, 1783, Buonaparte and Bourrienne, according to the statement of the latter, shared the first prize in mathematics; and soon afterward, in the same year, a royal inspector, M. de Keralio, arrived at Brienne to test the progress of the King's wards. He took a great fancy to the little Buonaparte, and declaring that, though unacquainted with his family, he found a spark in him which must not be extinguished, wrote an emphatic recommendation of the lad, couched in the following terms: "M. de Bonaparte (Napoleon), born August fifteenth, 1769. Height four feet, ten inches, ten lines [about five feet three inches English]. Constitution: excellent health, docile disposition, mild, straightforward, thoughtful. Conduct most satisfactory; has always been distinguished for his application in mathematics. He is fairly well acquainted with history and geography. He is weak in all accomplishments—drawing, dancing, music, and the like. This boy would make an excellent sailor; deserves to be admitted to the school in Paris." Unfortunately for the prospect of a place in the navy, M. de Keralio, who was a powerful friend, died almost immediately.

By means of further genuflections, supplications, and wearisome persistency, Charles de Buonaparte at last obtained favor not only for Lucien, but for Joseph also. Deprived unjustly of his inheritance, deprived also of his comforts and his home in pursuit of the ambitious schemes rendered necessary by that wrong, the poor diplomatist was now near the end of his resources and his energy. Napoleon had been destined for the navy. Through the favor of the school inspector, who had just died, he was to have been sent to Paris, and thence assigned to Toulon, the naval port in closest connection with Corsica. There were so many influential applications, however, for that favorite branch of the service that the department must rid itself of as many as possible; a youth without a patron would be the first to suffer. The agreement, therefore, was that he might continue at Brienne, while Joseph could go thither, or to Metz, in order to make up his deficiencies in the mathematical sciences and pass his examinations to enter the royal service along with Napoleon, on condition that the latter would renounce his plans and choose a career in the army.

The letter in which the boy communicates his decision to his father is as remarkable as the one just mentioned. The anxious and industrious parent had finally broken down, and in his feeble health had taken Joseph as a support and help on the arduous homeward journey. With the same succinct, unsparing statement as before, Napoleon confesses his disappointment, and in commanding phrase, with logical analysis, lays down the reasons why Joseph must come to Brienne instead of going to Metz. There is, however, a new element in the composition—a frank, hearty expression of affection for his family, and a message of kindly remembrance to his friends. But the most striking fact, in view of subsequent developments, is a request for Boswell's "History of Corsica," and any other histories or memoirs relating to the island. "I will bring them back when I return, if it be six years from now." He probably did not remember that he was preparing to strip France of her latest and highly cherished acquisition at her own cost, or if he did, he must have felt like the archer pluming his arrow from the off-cast feathers of his victim's wing. It is plain that his humiliations at school, his studies in the story of liberty, his inherited bent, and the present disappointment, were all cumulative in the result of fixing his attention on his native land as the destined sphere of his activity.

Four days after writing he passed his examination a second time before the new inspector, announced his choice of the artillery as his branch of the service, and a month later was ordered to the military academy in Paris. This institution had not merely been restored to its former renown: it now enjoyed a special reputation as the place of reward to which only the foremost candidates for official honors were sent. The choice of the artillery seems to have been reached by a simple process of exclusion; the infantry was too unintellectual and indolent, the cavalry too expensive and aristocratic; between the engineers and the artillery there was little to choose—in neither did wealth or influence control promotion. The decision seems to have fallen as it did because the artillery was accidentally mentioned first in the fatal letter he had received announcing the family straits, and the necessary renunciation of the navy. On the certificate which was sent up with Napoleon from Brienne was the note: "Character masterful, imperious, and headstrong."

CHAPTER IV

IN PARIS AND VALENCE

Introduction to Paris—Death of Charles de Buonaparte—Napoleon's Poverty—His Character at the Close of His School Years—Appointed Lieutenant in the Regiment of La Fère—Demoralization of the French Army—The Men in the Ranks—Napoleon as a Beau—Return to Study—His Profession and Vocation.

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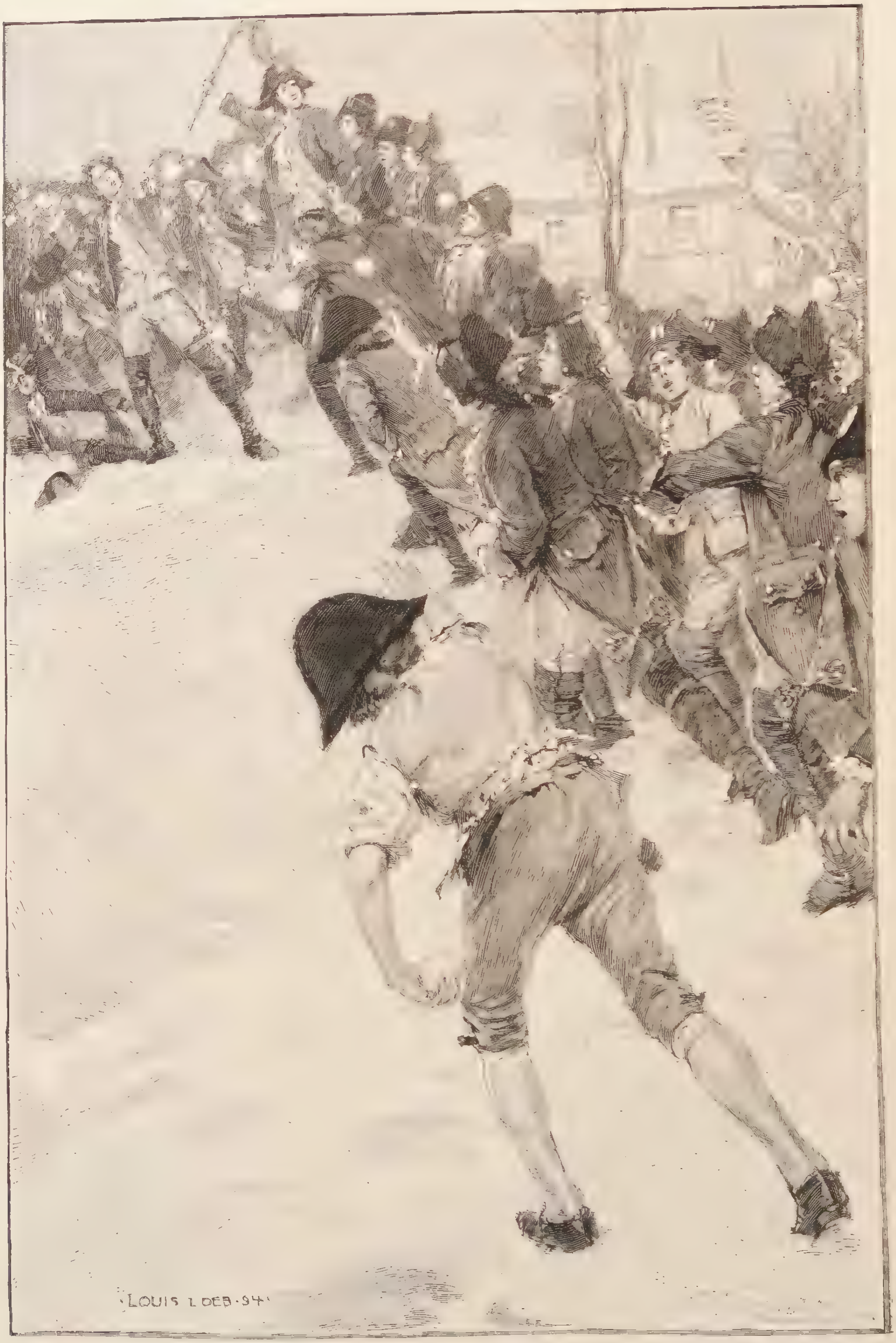
1784–86

IT was on October thirtieth, 1784, that Napoleon went to Paris. He was in the sixteenth year of his age, entirely ignorant of what were then called the "humanities," but well trained in history, geography, and the mathematical sciences. His knowledge, like the bent of his mind, was practical rather than theoretical, and he knew more about fortification and sieges than about metaphysical abstractions; more about the deeds of history than about its philosophy. His defiant scorn and habits of solitary study grew stronger together. It is asserted that his humor found vent in a preposterous and peevish memorial addressed to the Minister of War on the proper training of the pupils in French military schools! He may have written it, but it is almost impossible that it should ever have passed beyond the walls of the school, even as is claimed, for revision by a former teacher, Berton. Nevertheless he found almost, if not altogether, for the first time a real friend in the person of Des Mazis, a youth noble by birth and nature, who was assigned to him as a pupil-teacher, and was moreover a foundation scholar like himself. It is also declared by various authorities that from time to time he enjoyed the agreeable society of the bishop of Autun, who was now at Versailles, of his sister Elisa at Saint-Cyr, and, toward the close, of a family friend who had just settled in Paris, the beautiful Mme. Permon, mother of the future duchess of Abrantès.

Although born in Corsica, she belonged to a branch of the noble Greek family of the Comneni. In view of the stringent regulations both of the military school and of Saint-Cyr, these visits are problematical, though not impossible.

It was in the city of Mme. Permon's residence, at Montpellier, that in the spring of 1785 Charles de Buonaparte died. This was apparently a final and mortal blow to the Buonaparte fortunes, for it seemed as if with the father must go all the family expectations. The circumstances were a fit close to the life thus ended. Feeling his health somewhat restored, and despairing of further progress in the settlement of his well-worn claim by legal methods, he had determined on still another journey of solicitation to Versailles. With Joseph as a companion he started; but a serious relapse occurred at sea, and ashore the painful disease continued to make such ravages that the father and son set out for Montpellier to consult the famous specialists of the medical faculty at that place. It was in vain, and, after some weeks, on February twenty-fourth the heartbroken father breathed his last. Having learned to hate the Jesuits, he had become indifferent to all religion, and is said by some to have repelled with his last exertions the kindly services of Fesch, who was now a frocked priest, and had hastened to his brother-in-law's bedside to offer the final consolations of the Church to a dying man. Others declare that he turned again to the solace of religion, and was attended on his death-bed by the Abbé Coustou. Failure as the ambitious schemer had been, he had nevertheless been so far the support of his family in their hopes of advancement. Sycophant as he had become, they recognized his untiring energy in their behalf, and truly loved him. He left them penniless and in debt, but he died in their service, and they sincerely mourned for him. Napoleon's letter to his mother is dignified and affectionate, referring in a becoming spirit to the support her children owed her. As if to show what a thorough child he still was, the dreary little note closes with an odd postscript giving the irrelevant news of the birth, two days earlier, of a royal prince—the duke of Normandy! This may have been added for the benefit of the censor who examined all the correspondence of the young men.

Some time before, General Marbeuf had married, and the pecuniary supplies to his boy friend seem after that event to have stopped. Mme. de Buonaparte was left with four infant children, the youngest,



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ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER

BONAPARTE ATTACKING SNOW FORTS AT THE SCHOOL OF BRIENNE

FROM THE DRAWING BY LOUIS LOEB

Jerome, but three months old. Their great-uncle, Lucien, the archdeacon, was kind, and Joseph, abandoning all his ambitions, returned to be, if possible, the support of the family. Napoleon's poverty was no longer relative or imaginary, but real and hard. Drawing more closely than ever within himself, he became a still more ardent reader and student, devoting himself with passionate industry to examining the works of Rousseau, the poison of whose political doctrines instilled itself with fiery and grateful stings into the thin, cold blood of the unhappy cadet. In many respects the instruction he received was admirable, and there is a traditional anecdote that he was the best mathematician in the school. But on the whole he profited little by his studies. The marvelous French style which he finally created for himself is certainly unacademic in the highest degree; in the many courses of modern languages he mastered neither German nor English, in fact he never had more than a few words of either; his attainments in fencing and horsemanship were very slender. Among all his comrades he made but one friend, while two of them became in later life his embittered foes. Phélippeaux thwarted him at Acre and Picot de Peccadeuc became Schwarzenberg's most trusted adviser in the successful campaigns of Austria against France.

Whether to alleviate as soon as possible the miseries of his destitution, or, as has been charged, to be rid of their querulous and exasperating inmate, the authorities of the military school shortened his stay to the utmost of their ability, and admitted Buonaparte to examination in August, 1785, less than a year from his admission. He passed with no distinction, being forty-second in rank, but above his friend Des Mazis, who was fifty-sixth. His appointment, therefore, was due to an entire absence of rivalry, the young nobility having no predilection for the arduous duties of service in the artillery. He was eligible merely because he had passed the legal age, and had given evidence of sufficient acquisitions. In an oft-quoted description, purporting to be an official certificate given to the young officer on leaving, he is characterized as reserved and industrious, preferring study to any kind of amusement, delighting in good authors, diligent in the abstract sciences, caring little for the others, thoroughly trained in mathematics and geography; quiet, fond of solitude, capricious, haughty, extremely inclined to egotism, speaking little, energetic in his replies, prompt and severe in repartee; having much self-esteem; ambitious and aspiring to any height: "the youth is worthy of protection." There is, unfortunately, no documentary evidence to sustain the genuineness of this report; but whatever its origin, it is so nearly contemporary that it probably contains some truth.

The two friends had both asked for appointments in a regiment stationed at Valence, known by the style of La Fère. Des Mazis had a brother in it; the ardent young Corsican would be nearer his native land, and might, perhaps, be detached for service in his home. They were both nominated in September, but the appointment was not made until the close of October. Buonaparte was reduced to utter penury by the long delay, his only resource being the two hundred livres provided by the funds of the school for each of its pupils until they reached the grade of captain. It was probably, and according to the generally received account, at his comrade's expense, and in his company, that he traveled. Their slender funds were exhausted by boyish dissipation at Lyons, and they measured the long leagues thence to their destination on foot, arriving at Valence early in November.

The growth of absolutism in Europe had been due at the outset to the employment of standing armies by the kings, and the consequent alliance between the crown, which was the paymaster, and the people, who furnished the soldiery. There was constant conflict between the crown and the nobility concerning privilege, constant friction between the nobility and the people in the survivals of feudal relation. This sturdy and wholesome contention among the three estates ended at last in the victory of the kings. In time, therefore, the army became no longer a mere support to the monarchy, but a portion of its moral organism, sharing its virtues and its vices, its weakness and its strength, reflecting, as in a mirror, the true condition of the state so far as it was personified in the king. The French army, in the year 1785, was in a sorry plight. With the consolidation of classes in an old monarchical society, it had come to pass that, under the prevailing voluntary system, none but men of the lowest social stratum would enlist. Barracks and camps became the schools of vice. "Is there," exclaimed one who at a later day was active in the work of army reform — "is there a father who does not shudder when abandoning his son, not to the chances of war, but to the associations of a crowd of scoundrels a thousand times more dangerous?"

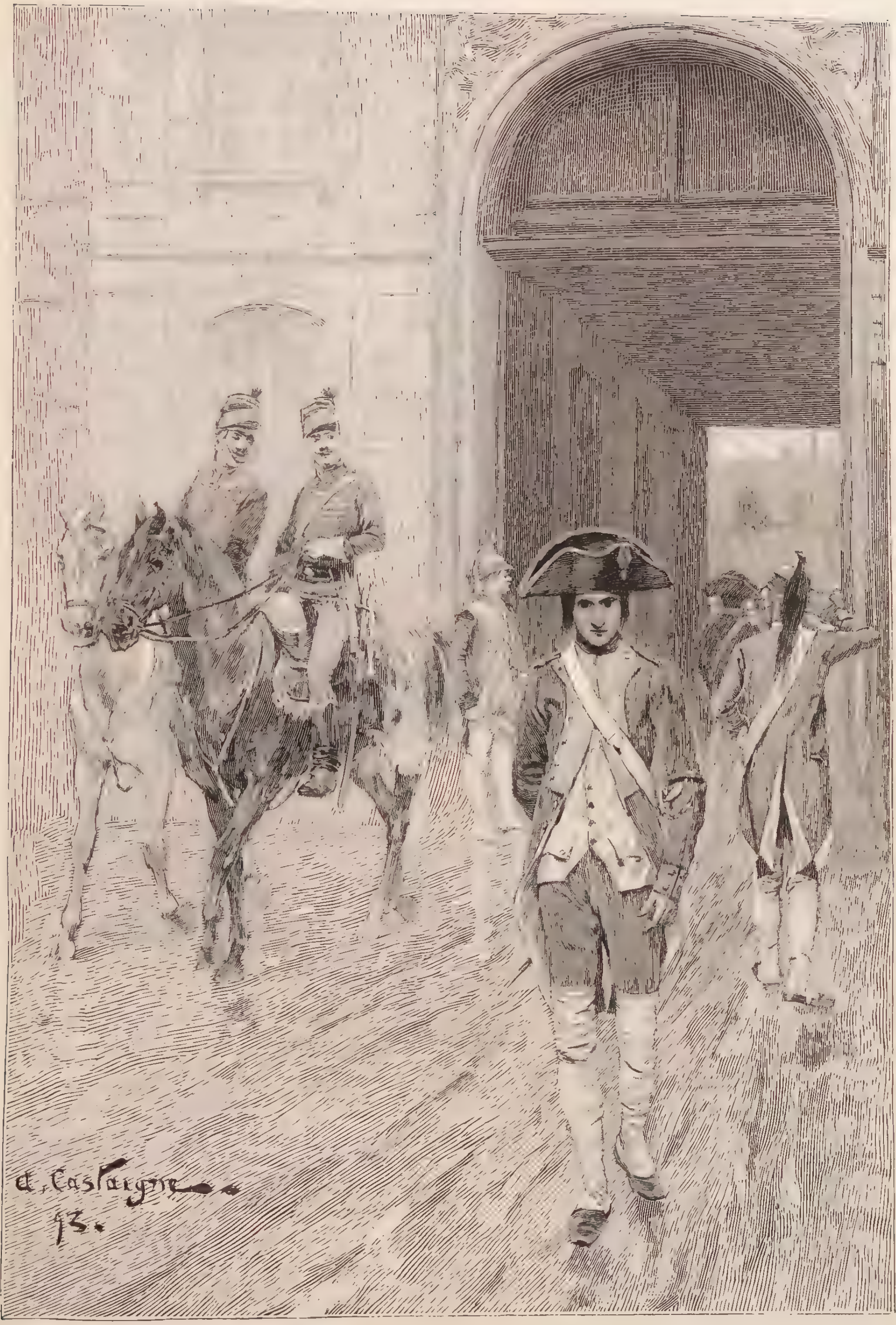
We have already had a glimpse at the character of the officers.

Their first thought was position and pleasure, duty and the practice of their profession being considerations of almost vanishing importance. Things were quite as bad in the central administration. Neither the organization, nor the equipment, nor the commissariat, was in condition to insure accuracy or promptness in the working of the machine. The regiment of La Fère was but a sample of the whole. "Dancing three times a week," says the advertisement for recruits, "rackets twice, and the rest of the time skittles, prisoners' base, and drill. Pleasures reign, every man has the highest pay, and all are well treated." Buonaparte's pay was eleven hundred and twenty livres a year; his necessary expenses for board and lodging were seven hundred and twenty, leaving less than thirty-five livres, about seven dollars, a month for clothes and pocket-money. Fifteen years as lieutenant, fifteen as captain, and, for the rest of his life, half pay with a decoration — such was the summary of the prospect before the ordinary commonplace officer in a like situation.

During the first months of his garrison service, Buonaparte, as an apprentice, saw arduous service in matters of detail, but he threw off entirely the darkness and reserve of his character, taking a full draught from the brimming cup of pleasure. On January tenth, 1786, he was finally received to full standing as lieutenant. The novelty, the absence of restraint, the comparative emancipation from the arrogance and slights to which he had hitherto been subject, good news from the family in Corsica, whose hopes as to the inheritance were once more high — all these elements combined to intoxicate for a time the boy of sixteen. The strongest will cannot forever repress the exuberance of budding manhood. There were balls, and with them the first experience of gallantry. The young officer even took dancing-lessons. Moreover, in the drawing-rooms of the Abbé of Saint-Ruff and his friends, for the first time he saw the manners and heard the talk of refined society — provincial, to be sure, but excellent. It was to the special favor of Monseigneur de Marbeuf, the bishop of Autun, that he owed his warm reception. The acquaintances there made were with persons of local consequence, who in later years reaped a rich harvest for their condescension to the young stranger. Of his fellow-officers he saw but little, not because they were distant, but because he had no genius for good-fellowship, and the habit of indifference to his comrades had grown strong upon him.

The period of pleasure was not long. It is impossible to judge whether the little self-indulgence was a weak relapse from an iron purpose or part of a definite plan. The former is more likely, so abrupt and apparently conscience-stricken was the return to labor. Even during the months from November to April he had not entirely deserted his favorite studies, and again Rousseau had been their companion and guide. But in the spring it was the Abbé Raynal of whom he became a devotee. At the first blush it seems as if Buonaparte's studies were irregular and haphazard. It is customary to attribute slender powers of observation and undefined purposes to childhood and youth. The opinion may be correct in the main, and would, for the matter of that, be true as regards the great mass of adults. But the more we know of psychology through autobiographies, the more certain it appears that many a great life-plan has been formed in childhood, and carried through with unbending rigor to the end. Whether Buonaparte consciously ordered the course of his study and reading or not, there is unity in it from first to last.

After the first rude beginnings there were two nearly parallel lines in his work. The first was the acquisition of what was essential to the practice of a profession — nothing more. No one could be a soldier in either army or navy without a practical knowledge of history and geography, for the earth and its inhabitants are in a special sense the elements of military activity. Nor can towns be fortified, nor camps intrenched, nor any of the manifold duties of the general in the field be performed without the science of quantity and numbers. Just these things, and just so far as they were practical, the dark, ambitious boy was willing to learn. For spelling, grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy he had no care; neither he nor his sister Elisa, the two strong natures of the family, could ever spell any language with accuracy and ease, or speak and write with rhetorical elegance. Among the private papers of his youth there is but one mathematical study of any importance; the rest are either trivial, or have some practical bearing on the problems of gunnery. When at Brienne, his patron had certified that he cared nothing for accomplishments and had none. This was the case to the end. But there was another branch of knowledge equally practical, but at that time necessary to so few that it was neither taught nor learned in the schools — the art of politics.



DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER

BONAPARTE AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL, PARIS, 1784

FROM THE DRAWING BY ANDRÉ CASTAIGNE

CHAPTER V

PRIVATE STUDY AND GARRISON LIFE

Napoleon as a Student of Politics—Nature of Rousseau's Political Teachings—The Abbé Raynal—Napoleon Aspires to be the Historian of Corsica—Napoleon's First Love—His Notions of Political Science—The Books He Read—Napoleon at Lyons—His Transfer to Douay—A Victim to Melancholy—Return to Corsica.

IN one sense it is true that the first Emperor of the French was a man of no age and of no country; in another sense he was, as few have been, the child of his surroundings and of his time. The study of politics was his own notion; the matter and method of the study were conditioned by his relations to the thought of Europe in the last century. He evidently hoped that his military and political attainments would one day meet in the culmination of a grand career. Those years of his life which appear like a realization of the plan were, in fact, the least successful. The unsoundness of his political instructors, and the temper of the age, combined to thwart this ambitious purpose.

Rousseau had every fascination for the young at that time—a captivating style, persuasive logic, the sentiment of a poet, the intensity of a prophet. A native of Corsica would be doubly drawn to him by his interest in that romantic island. Sitting at the feet of such a teacher, a young scholar would learn through convincing argument the evils of a passing social state as they were not exhibited elsewhere. He would discern the dangers of ecclesiastical authority, of feudal privilege, of absolute monarchy; he would see their disastrous influence in the prostitution, not only of social, but of personal morality; he would become familiar with the necessity for renewing institutions as the only means of regenerating society. All these lessons would have a value not to be exaggerated. On the other hand, when it came to the substitution of positive teaching for negative criticism, he would learn nothing of value and much that was most dangerous. In utter disregard of a sound historical method there was set up as the cornerstone of the new political structure a fiction of the most dangerous kind. Buonaparte in his notes, written as he read, shows his contempt for it in an admirable refutation of the fundamental error of Rousseau as to the state of nature by this remark: "I believe man in the state of nature had the same power of sensation and reason which he now has." But if he did not accept the premises, there was a portion of the conclusion which he took with avidity, the most dangerous point in all Rousseau's system; namely, the doctrine that all power proceeds from the people, not because of their nature and their historical organization into families and communities, but because of an agreement by individuals to secure public order, and that, consequently, the consent given they can withdraw, the order they have created they can destroy. In this lay not merely the germ, but the whole system of extreme radicalism, the essence, the substance, and the sum of the French Revolution on its extreme and doctrinaire side.

Rousseau had been the prophet and forerunner of the new social dispensation. The scheme for applying its principles is found in a work which bears the name of a very mediocre person, the Abbé Raynal, a man who enjoyed in his day an extended and splendid reputation which now seems to have had only the slender foundations of unmerited persecution and the friendship of superior men. In 1770 appeared anonymously a volume of which, as was widely known, he was the compiler. "The Philosophical and Political History of the Establishments and Commerce of the Europeans in the Two Indies" is a miscellany of extracts from many sources, and of short essays by Raynal's brilliant acquaintances, on superstition, tyranny, and similar themes. The reputed author had written for the public prints, and had published several works, none of which attracted attention. The amazing success of this one was not remarkable if, as the critics now believe, at least a third of the text was by Diderot. The position of Raynal as a man of letters immediately became a foremost one, and such was the vogue of a second edition published over his name in 1780 that the authorities became alarmed. The climax to his renown was achieved when, in 1781, his book was publicly burned, and the compiler fled into exile.

The storm had finally subsided, he had returned to France in 1785, and through the friendship of Mme. du Colombier, a patroness of the young lieutenant, communication was opened between the great man and his aspiring reader. "Not yet eighteen," are the startling words in the letter written by Buonaparte, "I am a writer: it is the age when we must learn. Will my boldness subject me to your raillery? No; I am sure. If indulgence be a mark of true genius, you should have much indulgence. I inclose chapters one and two of a history of Corsica, with an outline of the rest. If you approve, I will go on; if you advise me to stop, I will go no further." The young historian's letter teems with bad spelling and bad grammar, but it is saturated with the spirit of his age. The chapters as they came to Raynal's hands are not in existence so far as is known, and posterity can never judge how monumental their author's assurance was. The abbé's reply was kindly, but he advised the novice to complete his researches, and then to rewrite his pieces. Buonaparte was not unwilling to profit by the counsels he received: soon after, in July, 1786, he gave two orders to a Genevese bookseller, one for books concerning Corsica, another for the memoirs of Mme. de Warens and her servant Claude Anet, which are a sort of supplement to Rousseau's "Confessions."

During May of the same year he jotted down with considerable fullness his notions of the true relations between Church and State. He had been reading Roustan's reply to Rousseau, and was evidently overpowered with the necessity of subordinating ecclesiastical to secular authority. The paper is rude and incomplete, but it shows whence he derived his policy of dealing with the Pope and the Roman Church in France. It has very unjustly been called an attempted refutation of Christianity: it is nothing of the sort. Ecclesiasticism and Christianity being hopelessly confused in his mind, he uses the terms interchangeably in an academic and polemic discussion to prove that the theory of the social contract must destroy all ecclesiastical assumption of supreme power in the state.

Some of the lagging days were not only spent in novel-reading, as the Emperor in after years confessed to Mme. de Rémusat, but in attempts at novel-writing, to relieve the tedium of idle hours. It is said that first and last Buonaparte read "Werther" five times through. Enough remains among his boyish scribblings to show how fantastic were the dreams both of love and of glory in which he indulged.

Many entertain a shrewd suspicion that amid the gaieties of the winter he lost his heart, or thought he did, and was repulsed. At least, in his "Dialogue on Love," written five years later, he says, "I, too, was once in love," and proceeds, after a few lines, to decry the sentiment as harmful to mankind, a something from which God would do well to emancipate it. There seems to have been in the interval no opportunity for philandering so good as the one he had enjoyed during his boyish acquaintance with Mlle. Caroline du Colombier. It has, at all events, been her good fortune to secure, by this supposition, a place in history, not merely as the first girl friend of Napoleon, but as the object of his first passion.

But these were his avocations; the real occupation of his time was study. Besides reading again the chief works of Rousseau, and devouring those of Raynal, his most beloved author, he also read much in the works of Voltaire, of Filangieri, of Necker, and of Adam Smith. With note-book and pencil he extracted, annotated, and criticized, his mind alert and every faculty bent to the clear apprehension of the subject in hand. To the conception of the state as a private corporation, which he had imbibed from Rousseau, was now added the conviction that the institutions of France were no longer adapted to the occupations, beliefs, or morals of her people, and that revolution was a necessity. To judge from a memoir, presented some years later to the Lyons Academy, he must have absorbed the teachings of the "Two Indies" almost entire.

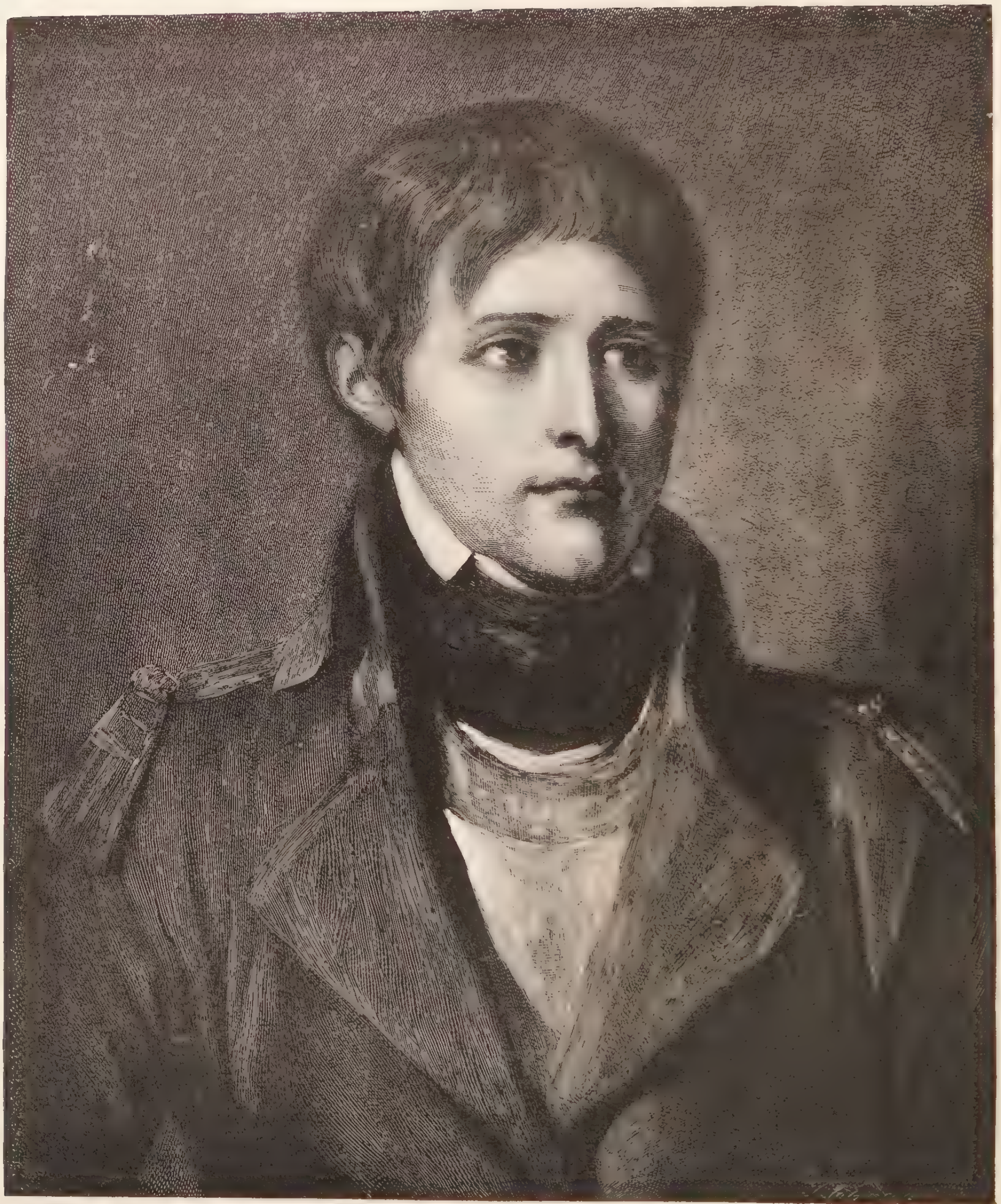
The consuming zeal for studies on the part of this incomprehensible youth is probably unparalleled. Having read Plutarch in his childhood, he now devoured Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus; China, Arabia, and the Indies dazzled his imagination, and what he could lay hands upon concerning the East was soon assimilated. England and Germany next engaged his attention, and toward the close of his studies he became ardent in examining the minutest particulars of French history. It was, moreover, the science of history, and not its literature, which occupied him — dry details of revenue, resources, and institutions; the Sorbonne, the bull Unigenitus, and church history in general; the character of peoples, the origin of institutions, the philosophy of legislation—all these he studied, and, if the fragments of his notes be trustworthy evidence, as they surely are, with some thoroughness. He also found time to read the masterpieces of French literature, and the great critical judgments which had been passed upon them.

The agreeable and studious life at Valence was soon ended. Early in August, 1786, a little rebellion, known as the "Two-cent Revolt," broke out in Lyons over an attempt to reassert an ancient feudal right concerning the sale of wine which had long been in abeyance. The neighboring garrisons were ordered to furnish their respective quotas for its suppression. Buonaparte's company was sent among others, but the disturbance was already quelled when he arrived, and the days he spent at Lyons were so agreeable that, as he wrote his uncle Fesch, he left the city with regret "to follow his destiny." His regiment had been ordered northward to Douay in Flanders; he rejoined it and reached that city about the middle of October.

The time spent under the inclement skies of the north must have been dreary if he regularly received news from home. Utterly without success in finding occupation in Corsica, and hopeless as to France, Joseph had some time before turned his eyes toward Tuscany for a possible career. He was now about to make a final effort, and seek personally at the Tuscan capital employment of any kind that might offer. Lucien, the archdeacon, was seriously ill, and General Marbeuf, the last influential friend of the family, had died. Louis had been promised a scholarship in one of the royal artillery schools; deprived of his patron, he would probably lose the appointment. Finally, the pecuniary affairs of Mme. de Buonaparte were again entangled, and now appeared hopeless. She had for a time been receiving an annual state bounty for raising mulberry-trees, as France was introducing silk culture into the island. The inspectors had condemned this year's work, and were withholding the allowance. These were the facts; it was doubtless a knowledge of them which put an end to all Napoleon's study, historical or political. He immediately applied for leave of absence, that he might instantly set out to his mother's relief. His request was refused. No leave could be obtained until January.

Despondent and anxious, he moped, grew miserable, and contracted a slight malarial fever which for the next six or seven years never entirely relaxed its hold on him. Among his papers has recently been found a long, wild, pessimistic rhapsody, in which there is talk of suicide. The plaint is of the degeneracy among men, of the destruction of primitive simplicity in Corsica by the French occupation, of his own isolation, and of his yearning to see his friends once more. Life is no longer worth while; his country gone, a patriot has naught to live for, especially when he has no pleasure and all is pain—when the character of those about him is to his own as moonlight is to sunlight. If there were but a single life in his way, he would bury the avenging blade of his country and her violated laws in the bosom of the tyrant. Some of his complaining was even less coherent than this. It is absurd to take the morbid outpouring seriously, except in so far as it goes to prove that its writer was a victim of the sentimental egoism into which the psychological studies of the eighteenth century had degenerated, and to suggest that possibly if he had not been Napoleon he might have been a Werther. Though dated May third, no year is given, and it may well describe the writer's feelings in the despondency of this winter. No such state of mind was likely to have arisen in the preceding spring.

The slow weeks finally passed; on February first, 1787, the leave began. Traveling by way of Valence and Marseilles, he visited in the former city his old friend the Abbé of Saint-Ruff, to solicit his favor for Lucien, who, though at Brienne, would study nothing but the humanities, and was determined to enter the seminary at Aix and to become a priest. At Marseilles he paid his respects to the Abbé Raynal, no doubt requesting advice, and seeking further encouragement in his historical labors. Thence he sailed to Ajaccio, arriving, if the ordinary time had been consumed in the journey, toward the close of the month. Such appears to be the likeliest account of this period, although our knowledge is not complete. In the archives of Douay there is, according to the local historian, a record of Buonaparte's presence in that city with the regiment La Fère, and he himself declared at Elba that he had been sent thither. But in the brief note made in youth by his own hand, and entitled "Epochs of My Life," he wrote that he left Valence on September first, 1786, for Ajaccio, arriving on the fifteenth. Weighing the probabilities, it seems likely that the latter was untrue, since there is but the slenderest possibility of his having been at Douay in the following year, the only other hypothesis, and no record of his activities in Corsica before the spring of 1787.



IN THE COLLECTION OF M. C. MARQUIS DE LAS CASAS

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

LIEUTENANT OF ARTILLERY

FROM THE PAINTING BY JEAN-BAPTISTE GREUZE

CHAPTER VI

FURTHER ATTEMPTS AT AUTHORSHIP

Straits of the Bonaparte Family—Napoleon's Efforts to Relieve Them—His History and Short Stories—Visit to Paris—Secures Extension of His Leave—The Family Fortunes Desperate—The History of Corsica Completed—Its Style, Opinions, and Value—Failure to Find a Publisher—Sentiments Expressed in His Short Stories—Napoleon's Irregularities as a French Officer—His Vain Appeal to Paoli—The History Dedicated to Necker.

WHEN Napoleon arrived at Ajaccio, and, after an absence of eight years, found himself again with his family, their affairs were in a serious condition. Not one of the old French officials remained; the diplomatic leniency of the first occupation was giving place to the official stringency of a firmer administration; proportionately the disaffection of the patriot remnant among the people was slowly developing into a wide-spread discontent. Joseph, the hereditary head of a family which had been thoroughly French in conduct, and was supposed to be so in sentiment, which at least looked to the King for further favors, was still a stanch royalist. Having been unsuccessful in every other direction, he was now seeking to establish a mercantile connection with Florence which would enable him to engage in the oil-trade. The modest beginning was, he hoped, about to be made. It was high time, for the only support of his mother and her children, in the failure of her mulberry plantations, was the income of the old archdeacon, who was now confined to his room, and growing feebler every day under attacks of gout. Unfortunately, Joseph's well-meant efforts again came to naught.

The behavior of the pale, feverish, masterful young lieutenant was far from praiseworthy. He filled the house with his new-fangled philosophy, and assumed a self-important air. Among the letters which he wrote was one dated April first, 1787, to the renowned Dr. Tissot of Lausanne, referring to his correspondent's interest in Paoli, and asking advice concerning the treatment of the canon's gout. The physician never replied, and the epistle was found among his papers marked "unanswered and of little interest." The old ecclesiastic listened to his nephew's patriotic tirades, and even approved; Mme. de Buonaparte coldly disapproved. She would have preferred calmer, more efficient common sense. Not that her son was inactive in her behalf; on the contrary, he began a series of busy representations to the provincial officials which secured some good will and even trifling favor to the family. But the results were not conclusive, for the mulberry money was not paid.

As the time for return to service drew near, he applied, on the ground of ill health, for a renewal of leave to last five and a half months. It was granted, and the regular round of family cares went on; but the days and weeks brought no relief. Ill health there was, and perhaps sufficient to justify that plea, but the physical fever was intensified by the checks which want set upon ambition. The passion for authorship reasserted itself with undiminished violence. The history of Corsica was resumed, recast, and vigorously continued, while at the same time the writer completed a short story entitled "The Count of Essex,"—with an English setting, of course,—and wrote a Corsican novel. The latter abounds in bitterness against France, the most potent force in the development of the plot being the dagger. The author's use of French, though easier, is still very imperfect. A slight essay, or rather story, in the style of Voltaire, entitled "The Masked Prophet," was also completed.

It was reported early in the autumn that many regiments were to be mobilized for special service, among them that of La Fère. This gave Napoleon exactly the opening he desired, and he left Corsica at once, without reference to the end of his furlough. He reached Paris in October, a fortnight before he was due, to find his regiment near by at St. Denis, on its way to the west, where incipient tumults were presaging the coming storm. The Estates-General of France were about to meet for the first time in one hundred and seventy-five years; they had last met in 1614, and had broken up in disorder. They were now called as a last remedy, not understood, but at least untried, for ever-increasing embarrassments; and the government, fearing still greater disorders, was making ready to repress any that might break out in districts known to be specially disaffected. All this was of secondary importance to Buonaparte; he had a scheme to use the crisis for the benefit of his family. Compelled by their utter destitution at the time of his father's death, he had temporarily and for one occasion assumed his father's rôle of suppliant. Now for a second time he sent in a petition. It was written in Paris and addressed, in his mother's behalf, to the intendant for Corsica resident at the capital. Though a supplication in form, it is unlike his father's humble and almost cringing papers, being rather a demand than a request; it is unlike them in another respect in that it contains a falsehood, or at least an utterly misleading half-truth: a statement that he had shortened his leave because of his mother's urgent necessities.

The paper was not handed in until after the expiration of his leave, and his true object was not to rejoin his regiment, as was hinted in it, but to secure a second extension of leave. Such was the slackness of discipline that he spent all of November and the first half of December in Paris, remaining in that city until he actually succeeded in procuring permission to spend the next six months in Corsica. He was quite as disingenuous in his request to the Minister of War as in his memorial to the intendant for Corsica, representing that the estates of Corsica were about to meet, and that his presence was essential to safeguard important interests which in his absence would be seriously compromised. Whatever such a plea may have meant, his serious cares as the real head of the family were ever uppermost, and never neglected. Louis had, as was feared, lost his appointment, and though not past the legal age, was really too old to await another vacancy; Lucien was determined to leave Brienne in any case, and to await at Aix the first chance which might arise of entering the seminary. Napoleon made some provision—what it was is not known—for Louis's further temporary stay at Brienne, and then took Lucien with him as far as their route lay together. He reached his home again on the first of January, 1788.

The affairs of the family were at last utterly desperate, and were likely, moreover, to grow worse before they grew better. The old archdeacon was failing daily, and, although known to have means, declared himself destitute of ready money. With his death would disappear a portion of his income; his patrimony and savings, which the Buonapartes hoped of course to inherit, were an uncertain quantity, probably insufficient for the needs of such a family. The mulberry money was still unpaid; all hope of wresting the ancestral estates from the government authorities was buried; Joseph was without employment, and, as a last expedient, was studying in Pisa for admission to the bar. Louis and Lucien were each a heavy charge; Napoleon's income was insufficient even for his own modest wants, regulated though they were by the strictest economy. Who shall cast a stone at the shiftiness of a boy not yet nineteen, charged with such cares, yet consumed with ambition, and saturated with the romantic sentimentalism of his times? Some notion of his embarrassment and despair can be obtained from a rapid survey of his mental states and the corresponding facts. An ardent republican and revolutionary, he was tied by the strongest bonds to the most despotic monarchy in Europe. A patriotic Corsican, he was the servant of his country's oppressor. Conscious of great ability, he was seeking an outlet in the pursuit of literature, a line of work entirely unsuited to his powers. The head and support of a large family, he was almost penniless; if he should follow his convictions, he and they might be altogether so. In the period of choice and requiring room for experiment, he saw himself doomed to a fixed, inglorious career, and caged in a framework of unpropitious circumstance. Whatever the moral obliquity in his feeble expedients, there is the pathos of human limitations in their character.

Whether the resolution had long before been taken, or was of recent formation, Napoleon now intended to make fame and profit go hand in hand. Returned to Ajaccio, the meeting of the Corsican estates was forgotten, and authorship was resumed, not merely with the ardor of one who writes from inclination, but with the regular drudgery of a craftsman. The amusements of his leisure hours would have been sufficient occupation for most men. Regulating, as far as possible, his mother's complicated affairs, he journeyed frequently to Bastia, probably to collect money due for young mulberry-trees which had been sold, possibly to get material for his history. He also completed a plan for the defense of St. Florent, of La Mortilla, and of the Gulf of Ajaccio; drew up a report on the organization of the Corsican militia; and wrote a paper on the strategic importance of the Madeleine Islands.

This was his play; his work was the history of Corsica. It was completed sooner than he had expected, and, anxious to reap the pecuniary harvest of his labors, he left for France in the early part of May to secure its publication. Although dedicated at first to a powerful patron, Monseigneur Marbeuf, then bishop of Sens, like many works from the pen of genius it is still in manuscript.

The book was of moderate size, and of moderate merit. Its form, repeatedly changed from motives of expediency, was at first that of letters addressed to the Abbé Raynal; its contents display little research and no scholarship. The style is intended to be popular, and is dramatic rather than narrative. There is exhibited, as everywhere in these early writings, an intense hatred of France, a glowing affection for Corsica and her heroes. A very short account of one chapter will sufficiently characterize the whole work. Having outlined in perhaps the most effective passage the career of Sampiero, and sketched his diplomatic failures at all the European courts except that of Constantinople, where at last he had secured sympathy and was promised aid, the author depicts the patriot's bitterness when recalled by the news of his wife's treachery. Confronting his guilty spouse, deaf to every plea for pity, hardened against the tender caresses of his children, the Corsican hero utters judgment. "Madam," he sternly says, "in the face of crime and disgrace, there is no other resort but death." Vannina at first falls unconscious, but, regaining her senses, she recalls the memory of her earlier virtue, and, facing her fate, begs as a last favor that no base executioner shall lay his soiled hands on the wife of Sampiero, but that he himself shall execute the sentence. Vannina's behavior moves her husband, but does not touch his heart. "The pity and tenderness," says Buonaparte, "which she should have awakened found a soul thenceforward closed to the power of sentiment. Vannina died. She died by the hands of Sampiero."

Neither the publishers of Valence, nor those of Dôle, nor those of Auxonne, would accept the work. At Paris one was finally found who was willing to take a half risk. The author, disillusioned but sanguine, was on the point of accepting the proposition, and was occupied with considering ways and means, when the Bishop of Sens was suddenly disgraced. The manuscript was immediately copied and revised, with the result, probably, of making its tone more intensely Corsican; for it was now to be dedicated to Paoli. The literary aspirant must have foreseen the coming crash, and must have felt that the exile was to be again the liberator, and perhaps the master, of his native land. At any rate, he abandoned the idea of immediate publication, possibly in the dawning hope that as Paoli's lieutenant he could make Corsican history better than he could write it. It is this copy which has been preserved; the original was probably destroyed.

The other literary efforts of this feverish time were not as successful even as those in historical writing. The stories are wild and crude; one only, "The Masked Prophet," has any merit or interest whatsoever. Though more finished than the others, its style is also abrupt and full of surprises; the scene and characters are Oriental; the plot is a feeble invention. An ambitious and rebellious ameer is struck with blindness, and has recourse to a silver mask to deceive his followers. Unsuccessful, he poisons them all, throws their corpses into pits of quicklime, then leaps in himself, to deceive the world and leave no trace of mortality behind. His enemies believe, as he desired, that he and his people have been taken up into heaven. The whole, however, is dimly prescient, and the concluding lines of the fable have been thought by believers in augury to be prophetic. "Incredible instance! How far can the passion for fame go!" Among the papers of this period are also a constitution for the "calotte," a secret society in the army, and many political notes. One of these is a project for an essay on royal power, intended to treat of its origin and to display its usurpations, and which closes with these words: "There are but few kings who do not deserve to be dethroned."

The various absences of Buonaparte from his regiment up to this time are antagonistic to our modern ideas of military duty. The subsequent ones seem simply inexplicable, even in a service so lax as that of the crumbling Bourbon dynasty. He did not reach Auxonne, where the artillery regiment La Fère was now stationed, until the end of May, 1788. He remained there less than a year and a half, and then actually obtained another leave of absence, from September tenth, 1789, to February, 1791, which he fully intended should end in his retirement from the French service. The incidents of this second term of garrison life are not numerous, but from the considerable body of his notes and exercises which dates from this period we know that he suddenly developed great zeal in the study of artillery, theoretical and practical, and that he redoubled his industry in the pursuit of historical and political science. In the former line of work he made the acquaintance of Duteil, a brother of whom befriended him at Toulon; in the latter he read Plato and examined the constitutions of antiquity, devouring with avidity what literature he could find concerning Venice, Turkey, Tatary, and Arabia. At the same time he carefully read the history of England, and made some accurate observations on the condition of contemporaneous politics in France. His last disappointment had rendered him more taciturn and misanthropic than ever; it seems clear that he was working to become an expert, not for the benefit of France, but for that of Corsica. Charged with the oversight of some slight works on the fortifications, he displayed such incompetence that he was actually punished by a short arrest. Misfortune still pursued the family. The youth who had been appointed to Brienne when Louis was expecting a scholarship suddenly died. Mme. de Buonaparte was true to the family tradition, and immediately forwarded a petition for the place, but was, as before, unsuccessful. Lucien was not yet admitted to Aix; Joseph was a barrister, to be sure, but briefless. Napoleon once again, but for the last time,—and with marked impatience, even with impertinence,—took up the task of solicitation. The only result was a good-humored, non-committal reply. Meantime the first mutterings of the revolutionary outbreak were heard, and spasmodic disorders, trifling but portentous, were breaking out, not only among the people, but even among the royal troops. One of these, at Seurre, was occasioned by the news that the hated and notorious syndicate existing under the scandalous agreement with the King known as the "Bargain of Famine" had been making additional purchases of grain from two merchants of that town. This was in April, 1789. Buonaparte was put in command of a company and sent to aid in suppressing the riot. But it was ended before he arrived; on May first he returned to Auxonne.

Four days later the Estates met at Versailles. What was passing in the mind of the restless, bitter, disappointed Corsican is again plainly revealed. A famous letter to Paoli, to which reference has already been made, is dated June twelfth. It is a justification of his cherished work as the only means open to a poor man, the slave of circumstances, for summoning the French administration to the bar of public opinion; viz., by comparing it with Paoli's. Willing to face the consequences, the writer asks for documentary materials and for moral support, ending with ardent assurances of devotion from his family, his mother, and himself. But there is a ring of false coin in many of its words and sentences. The "infamy" of those who betrayed Corsica was the infamy of his own father; the "devotion" of the Buonaparte family had been to the French interest, in order to secure free education, with support for their children, in France. The "enthusiasm" of Napoleon was a cold, unsentimental determination to push their fortunes, which, with opposite principles, would have been honorable enough. In later years Lucien said that he had made two copies of the history. It was probably one of these which has been preserved. Whether or not Paoli read the book does not appear. Be that as it may, his reply to Buonaparte's letter, written some months later, was not calculated to encourage the would-be historian. Without absolutely refusing the documents asked for by the aspiring writer, he explained that he had no time to search for them, and that, besides, Corsican history was only important in any sense by reason of the men who had made it, not by reason of its achievements. Among other bits of fatherly counsel was this: "You are too young to write history. Make ready for such an enterprise slowly. Patiently collect your anecdotes and facts. Accept the opinions of other writers with reserve." As if to soften the severity of his advice, there follows a strain of modest self-depreciation: "Would that others had known less of me and I more of myself. *Probe diu vivimus;* may our descendants so live that they shall speak of me merely as one who had good intentions."

Buonaparte's last shift in the treatment of his book was most undignified and petty. With the unprincipled resentment of despair, in want of money, not of advice, he entirely remodeled it for the third time, its chapters being now put as fragmentary traditions into the mouth of a Corsican mountaineer. In this form it was dedicated to Necker, the famous Swiss, who as French minister of finance was vainly struggling with the problem of how to distribute taxation equally, and to collect from the privileged classes their share. A copy was first sent to a former teacher for criticism. His judgment was extremely severe both as to expression and style. In particular, attention was called to the disadvantage of indulging in so much rhetoric for the benefit of an overworked public servant like Necker, and to the inappropriateness of putting his own metaphysical generalizations

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and captious criticism of French royalty into the mouth of a peasant mountaineer. Before the correspondence ended, Napoleon's student life was over. Necker had fled, the French Revolution was rushing on with ever-increasing speed, and the young adventurer, despairing of success as a writer, seized the proffered opening to become a man of action.

CHAPTER VII

THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

The French Aristocracy—Priests, Lawyers, and Petty Nobles—Burghers, Artisans, and Laborers—The Great Nobles a Barrier to Reform—Mistakes of the King—The Estates Meet at Versailles—The Court Party Provokes Violence—Downfall of Feudal Privilege.

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AT last the ideas of the century had declared open war on its institutions; their moral conquest was already coextensive with central and western Europe, but the first efforts toward their realization were to be made in France, for the reason that the line of least resistance was to be found not through the most down-trodden, but through the freest and the best-instructed, nation on the Continent. Both the clergy and the nobility of France had become accustomed to the absorption in the crown of their ancient feudal power. They were content with the great offices in the church, in the army, and in the civil administration, with exemption from the payment of taxes; they were happy in the delights of literature and the fine arts, in the joys of a polite, self-indulgent, and spendthrift society, so artificial and conventional that for most of its members a sufficient occupation was found in the study and exposition of its trivial but complex customs.

The serious-minded among the upper classes were as enlightened as any of their rank elsewhere. They were familiar with prevalent philosophies, and full of compassion for miseries which, for lack of power, they could not remedy, and which, to their dismay, they only intensified in their attempts at alleviation. They were even ready for considerable sacrifices. The gracious side of the character of Louis XVI. is but a reflection of the piety, moderation, and earnestness of many of the nobles. His rule was mild; there were no excessive indignities practised in the name of royal power except in cases like that of the "Bargain of Famine," where he believed himself helpless. The lower clergy, as a whole, were faithful in the performance of their duties. This was not true of the hierarchy. They were great landowners, and their interests coincided with those of the upper nobility. The doubt of the century had not left them untouched, and there were many without conviction or principle, time-serving and irreverent. The lawyers and other professional men were to be found, for the most part, in Paris and in the towns. They had their livelihood in the irregularities of society, and, as a class, were retentive of ancient custom and present social habits. Although by birth they belonged in the main to the third estate, they were in reality adjunct to the first, and consequently, being integral members of neither, formed a strong independent class by themselves. The petty nobles were in much the same condition with regard to the wealthy, powerful families in their own estate and to the rich burghers; they married the fortunes of the latter and accepted their hospitality, but otherwise treated them with the same exclusive condescension displayed to themselves by the great.

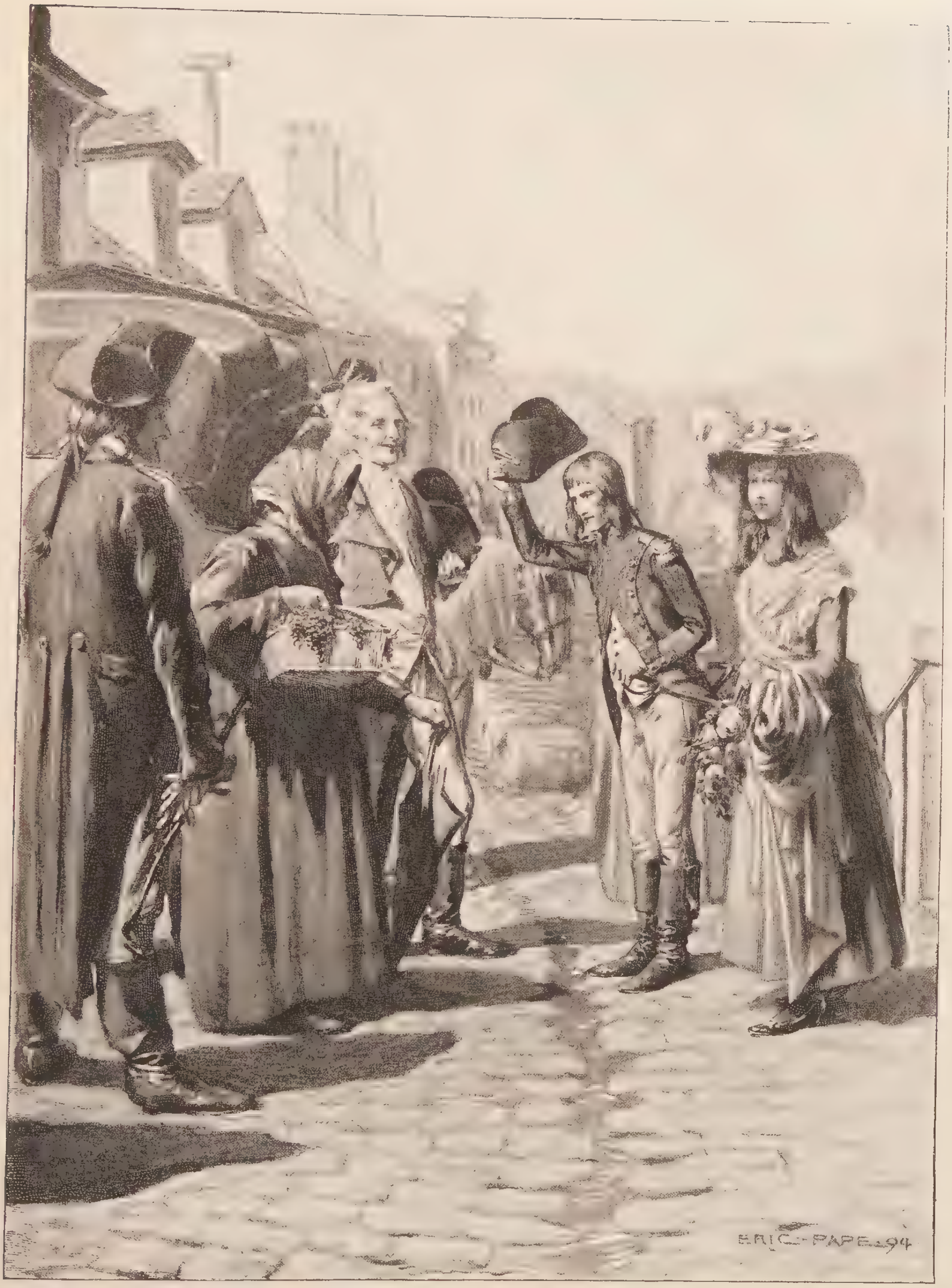
But if the estate of the clergy and the estate of the nobility were alike divided in character and interests, this was still more true of the burghers. In 1614, at the close of the middle ages, the third estate had been little concerned with the agricultural laborer. For various reasons this class had been gradually emancipated until now there was less serfage in France than elsewhere; more than a quarter, perhaps a third, of the land was in the hands of peasants and other small proprietors. This, to be sure, was economically disastrous, for over-division of land makes tillage unprofitable, and these very men were the taxpayers. The change had been still more marked in the denizens of towns. During the last two centuries the wealthy burgesses had grown still more wealthy in the expansion of trade, commerce, and manufactures; many had struggled and bought their way into the ranks of the nobility. The small tradesmen had remained smug, hard to move, and resentful of change. But there was a large body of men unknown to previous constitutions, and growing ever larger with the increase in population—intelligent and unintelligent artisans, half-educated employees in workshops, mills, and trading-houses, ever recruited from the country population, seeking such intermittent occupation as the towns afforded. The very lowest stratum of this society was then, as now, most dangerous; idle, dissipated, and unscrupulous, they were yet sufficiently educated to discuss and disseminate perilous doctrines, and were often most ready in speech and fertile in resource.

As early as 1739 there had been a deficiency in the French finances. From small beginnings the annual loans had grown until, in 1787, the sum to be raised over and above the regular income was no less than thirty-two millions of dollars. This was all due to the extravagance of the court and the aristocracy, who spent, for the most part, far more than the amount they actually collected and honestly believed to be their income. This course was vastly more disastrous than it appeared, being ruinous not only to personal but to national well-being, inasmuch as what the nobles, even the earnest and honest ones, believed to be their legitimate income was not really such. Two thirds of the land was in their hands; the other third paid the entire land-tax. They were therefore regarding as their own two thirds of what was in reality taken altogether from the pockets of the small proprietors. Small sacrifices the ruling class professed itself ready to make, but such a one as to pay their share of the land-tax—never. It had been proposed also to destroy the monopoly of the grain trade, and to abolish the road-work, a task more hateful to the people than any tax, because it brought them into direct contact with the exasperating superciliousness of petty officials. But in all these proposed reforms Necker, Calonne, and Loménie de Brienne, each approaching the nobles from a separate standpoint, had alike failed. The nobility could see in such retrenchment and change nothing but ruin for themselves. An assembly of notables, called in 1781, would not listen to propositions which seemed suicidal. The King began to alienate the affection of his natural allies, the people, by yielding to the clamor of the court party. From the nobility he could wring nothing. The royal treasury was therefore actually bankrupt, the nobles believed that they were threatened with bankruptcy, and the people knew that they themselves were not only bankrupt, but also hungry and oppressed.

At last the King, aware of the nation's extremity, began to undertake reforms without reference to class prejudice, and on his own authority. He decreed a stamp-tax, and the equal distribution of the land-tax. He strove to compel the unwilling parliament of Paris, a court of justice which he himself had reconstituted, to register his decrees, and then banished it from the capital because it would not. That court had been the last remaining check on absolutism in the country, and, as such, an ally of the people; so that although the motives and the measures of Louis were just, the high-handed means to which he resorted in order to carry them alienated him still further from the affections of the nation. The parliament, in justifying its opposition, had declared that taxes in France could be laid only by the Estates-General. The people had almost forgotten the very name, and were entirely ignorant of what that body was, vaguely supposing that, like the English Parliament or the American Congress, it was in some sense a legislative assembly. They therefore made their voice heard in no uncertain sound, demanding that the Estates should meet. Louis abandoned his attitude of independence, and recalled the parliament from Troyes, but only to exasperate its members still further by insisting on a huge loan, on the restoration of civil rights to the Protestants, and on restricting, not only its powers, but those of all similar courts throughout the realm. The parliament of Paris declared that France was a limited monarchy with constitutional checks on the power of the crown, and exasperated men flocked to the city to remonstrate against the menace to their liberties in the degradation of all the parliaments by the King's action in regard to that of Paris. Those from Brittany formed an association, which soon admitted other members, and developed into the notorious Jacobin Club, so called from its meeting-place, a convent on the Rue St. Honoré once occupied by Dominican monks who had moved thither from the Rue St. Jacques.

To summon the Estates was a virtual confession that absolutism in France was at an end. In the seventeenth century the three estates deliberated separately. Such matters came before them as were submitted by the crown, chiefly demands for revenue. A decision was reached by the agreement of any two of the three, and whatever proposition the crown submitted was either accepted or rejected. There was no real legislation. Louis no doubt hoped that the eighteenth-century assembly would be like that of the seventeenth. He could then, by the coalition of the nobles and the clergy against the burghers, or by any other arrangement of two to one, secure authorization either for his loans or for his reforms, as the case might be, and so carry both. But the France of 1789 was not the France of 1614. As soon as the call for the meeting was issued, and the decisive steps were taken, the whole country was flooded with pamphlets. Most of them were ephemeral; one was epochal. The Abbé Sieyès asked the question, "What is the third estate?" and answered it so as to strengthen the already spreading conviction that the people of France were really the nation. The King was so far convinced as to agree that the third estate should be represented by delegates equal in number to those of the clergy and nobles combined. The elections passed quietly, and on May fifth, 1789, the Estates met at Versailles, under the shadow of the court. It was immediately evident that the hands of the clock could not be put back two centuries, and that here was gathered an assembly unlike any that had ever met in the country, determined to express the sentiments, and to be the executive, of the masses who in their opinion constituted the nation. On June seventeenth, therefore, after long talk and much hesitation, the representatives of the third estate declared themselves the representatives of the whole nation, and invited their colleagues of the clergy and nobles to join them. Their meeting-place having been closed in consequence of this decision, they gathered without authorization in the royal tennis-court on June twentieth, and bound themselves by oath not to disperse until they had introduced a new order. Louis was nevertheless nearly successful in his plan of keeping the sittings of the three estates separate. He was thwarted by the eloquence and courage of Mirabeau. On June twenty-seventh a majority of the delegates from the two upper estates gave way, and joined those of the third estate as representatives of the people.

At this juncture the court party began the disastrous policy which in the end was responsible for most of the terrible excesses of the French Revolution, by insisting that troops should be called to restrain the Assembly, and that Necker should be banished. Louis showed the same vacillating spirit now that he had displayed in yielding to the Assembly, and assented. The noble officers had lately shown themselves untrustworthy, and the men in the ranks refused to obey when called to fight against the people. The baser social elements of the whole country had long since swarmed to the capital. Their leaders now fanned the flame of popular discontent until at last resort was had to violence. On July twelfth the barriers of Paris were burned, and the regular troops were defeated by the mob in the Place Vendôme; on July fourteenth the Bastille, in itself a harmless anachronism but considered by the masses to typify all the tyrannical shifts and inhu-



AQUARELLE MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

NAPOLEON ON HIS WAY TO CORSICA WITH HIS SISTER ELISA

FROM THE AQUARELLE BY ERIC PAPE

They were met at Valence by his former landlady, who brought him a present of fruit

man oppressions known to despotism, was razed to the ground. As if to crown their baseness, the extreme conservatives among the nobles, the very men who had brought the King to such straits, now abandoned him and fled.

Louis finally bowed to the storm, and came to reside among his people in Paris, as a sign of submission. Bailly, an excellent and judicious man, was made mayor of the city, and Lafayette, with his American laurels still unfaded, was made commander of a newly organized force, to be known as the National Guard. On July seventeenth the King accepted the red, white, and blue—the recognized colors of liberty—as national. The insignia of a dynasty were exchanged for the badge of a principle. A similar transformation took place throughout the land, and administration everywhere passed quietly into the hands of the popular representatives. The flying nobles found their châteaux hotter than Paris. Not only must the old feudal privileges go, but with them the old feudal grants, the charters of oppression in the muniment chests. These charters the peasants insisted must be destroyed. If they could not otherwise gain possession of them they resorted to violence, and sometimes in the intoxication of the hour they exceeded the bounds of reason, abusing both the persons and the legitimate property of their enemies. Death or surrender was often the alternative. So it was that there was no refuge on their estates, not even a temporary one, for those who had so long possessed them. Many had already passed into foreign lands; the emigration increased, and continued in a steady stream. The moderate nobles, honest patriots to whom life in exile was not life at all, now clearly saw that their order must yield: in the night session of August fourth, sometimes called the "St. Bartholomew of privilege," they surrendered their privileges in a mass. Every vestige, not only of feudal, but also of chartered privilege, was swept away; even the King's hunting-grounds were reduced to the dimensions permitted to a private gentleman. All men alike, it was agreed, were to renounce the conventional and arbitrary distinctions which had created inequality in civil and political life, and accept the absolute equality of citizenship. Liberty and fraternity were the two springers of the new arch; its keystone was to be equality. On August twenty-third the Assembly decreed freedom of religious opinion; on the next day freedom of the press.

CHAPTER VIII

BONAPARTE AND REVOLUTION IN CORSICA

NAPOLEON'S STUDIES CONTINUED AT AUXONNE — ANOTHER ILLNESS AND A FURLOUGH — HIS SCHEME OF CORSICAN LIBERATION — HIS APPEARANCE AT TWENTY — HIS ATTAINMENTS AND CHARACTER — HIS SHIFTY CONDUCT — THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY — NEW PARTIES IN CORSICA — SALICETTI AND THE NATIONALISTS — NAPOLEON BECOMES A POLITICAL AGITATOR — AND LEADER OF THE RADICALS — THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INCORPORATES CORSICA WITH FRANCE AND GRANTS AMNESTY TO PAOLI — MOMENTARY JOY OF THE CORSICAN PATRIOTS — THE FRENCH ASSEMBLY RIDICULES GENOA'S PROTEST — NAPOLEON'S PLAN FOR CORSICAN ADMINISTRATION.

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SUCH were the events taking place in the great world while Buonaparte was at Auxonne. That town, as had been expected, was most uneasy, and on July nineteenth, 1789, there was an actual outbreak of violence, directed there, as elsewhere, against the tax-receivers. The riot was easily suppressed, and for some weeks yet the regular round of studious monotony in the young lieutenant's life was not disturbed except as his poverty made his asceticism more rigorous. "I have no other resource but work," he wrote to his mother; "I dress but once in eight days [Sunday parade?]; I sleep but little since my illness; it is incredible. I retire at ten, and rise at four in the morning. I take but one meal a day, at three; that is good for my health."

More bad news came from Corsica. The starving patriot fell seriously ill, and for a time his life hung in the balance. On August eighth he was at last sufficiently restored to travel, and applied for a six months' furlough, to begin immediately. Under the regulations, in spite of his previous leaves and irregularities, he was this year entitled to such a vacation, but not before October. His plea that the winter was unfavorable for the voyage to Corsica was characteristic, for it was neither altogether true nor altogether false. He was feverish and ill, excited by news of turmoils at home, and wished to be on the scene of action; this would have been a true and sufficient ground for his request. It was likewise true, however, that his chance for a smooth passage was better in August than in October, and this evident fact, though probably irrelevant, might move the authorities. Their answer was favorable, and on September sixteenth he left Auxonne.

In the interval occurred a mutiny in the regiment. The pay of the men was far in arrears, and they demanded a division of the surplus which had accumulated from the various regimental grants, and which was managed by the officers for the benefit of their own mess. The officers were compelled to yield, so far had revolutionary license supplanted royal and military authority. Of course a general orgy followed. It seems to have been during these days that the scheme of Corsican liberation which brought him finally into the field of politics took shape in Napoleon's mind. Fesch had returned to Corsica, and had long kept his nephew thoroughly informed of the situation. By the anarchy prevailing all about him in France, and beginning to prevail in Corsica, his eyes were opened to the possibilities of the Revolution for one who knew how to take advantage of the changed order.

The appearance of Buonaparte in his twentieth year was not in general noteworthy. His head was shapely, but not uncommon in size, although disproportionate to the frame which bore it. His forehead was wide and of medium height; on each side long chestnut hair—lanky as we may suppose from his own account of his personal habits—fell in stiff, flat locks over his lean cheeks. His eyes were large, and in their steel-blue irises, lurking under deep-arched and projecting brows, was a penetrating quality which veiled the mind within. The nose was straight and shapely, the mouth large, the lips full and sensuous, although the powerful projecting chin diminished somewhat the true effect of the lower one. His complexion was sallow. The frame of his body was in general small and fine, particularly his hands and feet; but his deep chest and short neck were gigantic. This lack of proportion did not, however, interfere with his gait, which was firm and steady. The student of character would have declared the stripling to be self-reliant and secretive; ambitious and calculating; masterful, but kindly. In an age when phrenology was a mania, its masters found in his cranium the organs of what they called imagination and causality, of individuality, comparison, and locality — by which jargon they meant to say that he had a strong power of imaging and of inductive reasoning, a knowledge of men, of places, and of things.

The life of the young officer had thus far been so commonplace as to awaken little expectation for his future. Poor as he was, and careful of his slim resources, he had, like the men of his class, indulged his passions to a certain degree; but he had not been riotous in his living, and he had so far not a debt in the world. What his education and reading were makes clear that he could have known nothing with a scholar's comprehensive thoroughness except the essentials of his profession. But he could master details as no man before or since; he had a vast fund of information, and a historic outline drawn in fair proportion and powerful strokes. His philosophy was meager, but he knew the principles of Rousseau and Raynal thoroughly. His conception of politics and men was not scientific, but it was clear and practical. The trade of arms had not been to his taste. He heartily disliked routine, and despised the petty duties of his rank. His profession, however, was a means to an end; of any mastery of strategy or tactics or even interest in them he had as yet given no sign, but he was absorbed in contemplating and analyzing the exploits of the great world-conquerors. In particular his mind was dazzled by the splendors of the Orient as the only field on which an Alexander could have displayed himself, and he knew what but a few great minds have grasped, that the interchange of relations between the East and the West had been the life of the world. The greatness of England he understood to be largely due to her bestriding the two hemispheres.

Up to this moment he had been a theorist, and might have wasted his fine powers by further indulgence in dazzling generalizations, as so many boys do when not called to test their hypotheses by experience. Henceforward he was removed from this temptation. A plan for an elective council in Corsica to replace that of the nobles, and for a local militia, having been matured, he was a cautious and practical experimenter from the moment he left Auxonne. Thus far he had put into practice none of his fine thoughts, nor the lessons learned in books. The family destitution had made him a solicitor of favors, and, but for the turn in public affairs, he might have continued to be one. His own inclinations had made him both a good student and a poor officer; without a field for larger duties he might have remained as he was. In Corsica his line of conduct was not changed abruptly: the possibilities of greater things dawning gradually, the application of great conceptions already formed came with the march of events, not like the sun bursting out from behind a cloud.

Traveling by way of Aix, Napoleon took the unlucky Lucien with him. This wayward but independent younger brother, making no allowance, as he tells us in his published memoirs, for the disdain an older boy at school is supposed to feel for a younger one, blood relative or not, had been repelled by the cold reception his senior had given him at Brienne. Having left that school against the advice of the same would-be mentor, his suit for admission to Aix had been fruitless. Necessity was driving him homeward, and the two who in after days were again to be separated were now, for almost the only time in their lives, companions for a considerable period. Their intercourse made them no more harmonious in feeling. The only incident of the journey was a visit to the Abbé Raynal at Marseilles. We would gladly know something of the talk between the master and the pupil, but we do not.

Napoleon found no change in the circumstances of the Buonaparte family. The old archdeacon was still living, and for the moment all except Elisa were at home. On the whole, they were more needy than ever. The death of their patron, Marbeuf, had been followed by the final rejection of their long-urged suit, and this fact, combined with the political opinions of the elder Lucien, was beginning to wean them from the official clique. There were the same factions as before—the official party and the patriots. Since the death of Charles de Buonaparte, the former had been represented at Versailles by Buttafuoco, Choiseul's unworthy instrument in acquiring the island, and now, as then, an uninfluential and consequential self-seeker. Its members were all aristocrats and royalist in politics. The higher priesthood were of similar mind, and had chosen the Abbé Peretti to represent them; the parish priests, as in France, were with the people. Both the higher classes were comparatively small; in spite of twenty years of peace under French rule, they were both excessively unpopular, and utterly without any hold on the islanders. They had but one partizan with an influential name, a son of the old-time patriot Gaffori, the father-in-law

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of Buttafuoco. The overwhelming majority of the natives were little changed in their temper. There were the old, unswerving patriots who wanted absolute independence, and were now called Paolists; there were the self-styled patriots, the younger men, who wanted a protectorate that they might enjoy virtual independence and secure a career by peace. There was in the harbor towns on the eastern slope the same submissive, peace-loving temper as of old; in the west the same fiery, warlike spirit. Corte was the center of Paoli's power, Calvi was the seat of French influence; Bastia was radical, Ajaccio was about equally divided between the younger and older parties, with a strong infusion of official influence.

Both the representatives of the people in the National Convention were of the moderate party; one of them, Salicetti, was a man of ability, a friend of the Buonapartes, and destined later to influence deeply the course of their affairs. He and his colleague Colonna were urging on the National Assembly measures for the local administration of the island. To this faction, as to the other, it had become clear that if Corsica was to reap the benefits of the new era it must be by union under Paoli. All, old and young alike, desired a thorough reform of their barbarous jurisprudence, and, like all other French subjects, a free press, free trade, the abolition of all privilege, equality in taxation, eligibility to office without regard to rank, and the diminution of monastic revenues for the benefit of education. Nowhere could such changes be more easily made than in a land just emerging from barbarism, where old institutions were disappearing and new ones were still fluid. Paoli himself had come to believe that independence could more easily be secured from a regenerated France, and with her help, than by a warfare which might again arouse the ambition of Genoa.

Buonaparte's natural associates were the younger men—Masseria, son of a patriot line, Pozzo di Borgo, Peraldi, Cuneo, Ramolini, and others less influential. The only Corsican with French military training, he was, in view of uncertainties and probabilities already on the horizon, a person of considerable consequence. His contribution to the schemes of the young patriots was significant: it consisted in a proposal to form a body of local militia for the support of that central committee which his friends so ardently desired. The plan was promptly adopted by the associates, the radicals seeing in it a means to put arms once more into the hands of the people, the others no doubt having in mind the storming of the Bastille and the possibility of similar movements in Ajaccio and elsewhere. Buonaparte, the only trained officer among them, may have dreamed of abandoning the French service, and of a supreme command in Corsica. Many of the people who appeared well disposed toward France had from time to time received permission from the authorities to carry arms, many carried them secretly and without a license; but proportionately there were so few in both classes that vigorous or successful armed resistance was in most places impracticable. The attitude of the department of war at Paris was regulated by Buttafuoco, and was of course hostile to the insidious scheme of a local militia. The Minister of War would do nothing but submit the suggestion to the body against whose influence it was aimed, the hated council of twelve nobles. The stupid sarcasm of such a step was well-nigh criminal.

Under such instigation the flames of discontent broke out in Corsica. Paoli's agents were again most active. In many towns the people rose to attack the citadels or barracks, and to seize the authority. In Ajaccio Napoleon de Buonaparte promptly asserted himself as the natural leader. The already existing democratic club was rapidly organized into the nucleus of a home guard, and recruited in numbers. But there were none of Paoli's mountaineers to aid the unwarlike burghers, as there had been in Bastia. Gaffori appeared on the scene, but neither the magic of his name, the troops that accompanied him, nor the adverse representations of the council, which he brought with him, could allay the discontent. He therefore remained for three days in seclusion, and then departed in secret. On the other hand, the populace was intimidated, permitting without resistance the rooms of the club to be closed by the troops, and the town to be put under martial law. Nothing remained for the agitators but to protest and disperse. They held a final meeting therefore on October thirty-first, 1789, in one of the churches, and signed an appeal to the National Assembly, to be presented by Salicetti and Colonna. It had been written, and was read aloud, by Buonaparte, as he now signed himself. Some share in its composition was later claimed for Joseph, but the fiery style, the numerous blunders in grammar and spelling, the terse thought, and the concise form, are all characteristic of Napoleon. The right of petition, the recital of unjust acts, the illegal action of the council, the use of force, the hollowness of the pretexts under which their request had been refused, the demand that the troops be withdrawn and redress granted — all these are crudely but forcibly presented. The document presages revolution. Under a well-constituted and regular authority, its writer and signatories would of course have been punished for insubordination. Even as things were, an officer of the King was running serious risks by his prominence in connection with it.

Discouraging as was the outcome of this movement in Ajaccio, similar agitations elsewhere were more successful. The men of Isola Rossa, under Arena, who had just returned from a consultation with Paoli in England, were entirely successful in seizing the supreme authority; so were those of Bastia, under Murati, a devoted friend of Paoli. One untrustworthy authority, a personal enemy of Buonaparte, declares that the latter, thwarted in his own town, at once went over to Bastia, then the residence of the French royalist governor, and successfully directed the revolt in that place, but there is no corroborative evidence to this doubtful story.

Simultaneously with these events the National Assembly had been debating how the position of the King under the new constitution was to be expressed by his title. Absolutism being ended, he could no longer be king of France, a style which to men then living implied ownership. King of the French was selected as the new form; should they add "and of Navarre"? Salicetti, with consummate diplomacy, had already warned many of his fellow-delegates of the danger lest England should intervene in Corsica, and France lose one of her best recruiting-grounds. To his compatriots he set forth that France was the best protector, whether they desired partial or complete independence. He now suggested that if the Assembly thus recognized the separate identity of the Pyrenean people, they must supplement their phrase still further by the words "and of Corsica"; for it had been only nominally, and as a pledge, that Genoa in 1768 had put France in control. At this stage of the debate, Volney presented a number of formal demands from the Corsican patriots asking that the position of their country be defined. One of these papers certainly came from Bastia; among them also was probably the document which had been executed at Ajaccio. This was the culmination of the skilful revolutionary agitation which had been started and directed by Masseria under Paoli's guidance. The anomalous position of both Corsica and Navarre was clearly depicted in the mere presentation of such petitions.

"If the Navarrese are not French, what have we to do with them, or they with us?" said Mirabeau. The argument was as unanswerable for one land as for the other, and both were incorporated in the realm: Corsica on November thirtieth, by a proposition of Salicetti's, who was apparently unwilling, but who posed as one under imperative necessity. In reality he had reached the goal for which he had long been striving. Dumouriez, later so renowned as a general, and Mirabeau, the great statesman and orator, had both been members of the French army of occupation which had reduced Corsica to submission. The latter now recalled his misdeed with sorrow and shame in an impassioned plea for amnesty to all political offenders, including Paoli. There was bitter opposition, but the great orator prevailed.

The news was received in Corsica with every manifestation of joy; bonfires were lighted, and Te Deums were sung in the churches. Paoli to rejoin his own again! What more could disinterested patriots desire? Corsica a province of France! How could her aspiring youth secure a wider field for the exercise of their powers, and the attainment of ambitious ends? The desires of both parties were temporarily fulfilled. The names of Mirabeau, Salicetti, and Volney were shouted with acclaim, those of Buttafuoco and Peretti with reprobation. The regular troops were withdrawn from Ajaccio; the ascendancy of the liberals was complete.

Then feeble Genoa was heard once more. She had pledged the sovereignty, not sold it; had yielded its exercise, and not the thing itself; France might administer the government as she chose, but annexation was another matter. She appealed to the fairness of the King and the National Assembly to safeguard her treaty rights. Her tone was querulous, her words without force. In the Assembly the protest was but fuel to the fire. On January twenty-first, 1790, occurred an animated debate in which the matter was fully considered. The discussion was notable, as indicating the temper of parties and the nature of their action at that stage of the Revolution. Mirabeau as ever was the leader. He and his friends were scornful not only because of Genoa's temerity in seeming still to claim what France had conquered, but of her conception that mere paper contracts were binding where principles of public law were concerned! The opposition mildly but firmly recalled the existence of other nations than France, and suggested the consequences of international bad faith. The conclusion of the matter was the adoption of a cunning and insolent combination of two propositions, one made by each side, "to lay the request on the table, or to explain that there is no occasion for its consideration." The incident is otherwise important only in the light of Napoleon's future dealings with the Italian commonwealth.

The situation was now most delicate, as far as Buonaparte was concerned. His suggestion of a local militia contemplated the extension of the revolutionary movement to Corsica. His appeal to the National Assembly demanded merely the right to do what one French city or district after another had done, to establish local authority, to form a National Guard, and to unfurl the red, white, and blue. There was nothing in it about the incorporation of Corsica in France; that had come about through the insurgents of Bastia, who had been organized by Paoli, inspired by the attempt at Ajaccio, and guided at last by Salicetti. A little later Buonaparte took pains to set forth how much better, under his plan, would have been the situation of Corsican affairs if, with their guard organized and their colors mounted, they could have recalled Paoli, and have awaited the event with power either to reject such propositions as the royalists, if successful, would have made, or to accept the conclusions of the French Assembly with proper self-respect, and not on compulsion. Hitherto he had lost no opportunity to express his hatred of France; it is possible that he had planned the virtual independence of Corsica, with himself as the liberator, or at least as Paoli's Sampiero. The reservations of his Ajaccio document, and the bitterness of his feelings, are not, however, sufficient proof of such a presumption. But the incorporation had taken place, Corsica was a portion of France, and everybody was wild with delight.

CHAPTER IX

FIRST LESSONS IN REVOLUTION

French Soldier and Corsican Patriot—Paoli's Hesitancy—His Return to Corsica—Cross Purposes in France—A New Furlough—Money Transactions of Napoleon and Joseph—Open Hostilities against France—Thwarted a Second Time—Reorganization of Corsican Administration—Meeting of Bonaparte and Paoli—Corsican Politics—Studies in Society.

Chap. IX
1790

WHAT was to be the future of one whose feelings were so hostile to the nation with the fortunes of which he now seemed irrevocably identified? There is no evidence that Buonaparte ever asked himself such disquieting questions. To judge from his conduct, he was not in the least troubled. Fully aware of the disorganization, both social and military, which was well-nigh universal in France, with two months more of his furlough yet unexpired, he awaited developments, not hastening to meet difficulties before they presented themselves. What the young democrats could do, they did. The town government was entirely reorganized, with a friend of the Buonapartes as mayor, and Joseph—employed at last!—as his secretary. A local guard was also raised and equipped. Being French, however, and not Corsican, Napoleon could not accept a command in it, for he was already an officer in the French army. But he served in the ranks as a common soldier, and was an ardent agitator in the club, which almost immediately reopened its doors. In the impossibility of further action there was a relapse into authorship. The history of Corsica was again revised, though not softened, and dedicated to Raynal. In collaboration with Fesch, Buonaparte also drew up a memoir on the oath which was required from priests.

When Paoli first received news of the amnesty granted at the instance of Mirabeau, and of the action taken by the French Assembly, which had made Corsica a French department, he was delighted and deeply moved. His noble instincts told him at once that he could no longer live in the enjoyment of an English pension or even in England; for he was convinced that his country would eventually reach a more perfect autonomy under France than under the wing of any other power, and that as a patriot he must not fail even in appearance to maintain that position. But he also felt that his return to Corsica would endanger the success of this policy: the ardent mountaineers would demand more extreme measures for complete independence than he could take; the lowlanders would be angry at the attitude of sympathy with his old friends which he must assume. In a spirit of self-sacrifice, therefore, he made ready to exchange his comfortable exile for one more uncongenial and of course more bitter.

But the National Assembly, with less insight, desired nothing so much as his presence in the new French department. He was growing old, and yielded against his better judgment to the united solicitation of French interest and of Corsican impolicy. Passing through France, he was detained for over two months by the ovations forced upon him. In Paris the King urged him to accept honors of every kind; but they were firmly refused: the reception, however, which the Assembly gave him in the name of liberty, he declared to be the proudest occasion of his life. At Lyons the populace crowded the streets to cheer him, and delegations from the chief towns of his native island met him to solicit for each of their respective cities the honor of his landing. On July fourteenth, 1790, after twenty-one years of exile, the now aged hero set foot on Corsican land at Maginajo, near Capo Corso. His first act was to kneel and kiss the soil. The nearest town was Bastia, the revolutionary capital. There and elsewhere the rejoicings were general, and the ceremonies were such as only the warm hearts and willing hands of a primitive Italian people could devise and perform. Not one true Corsican but must "see and hear and touch him." But in less than a month his conduct was, as he had foreseen, so misrepresented by friend and foe alike, that it was necessary to defend him in Paris against the charge of scheming to hand over the island to England.

It is not entirely clear where Buonaparte was during this time. It is said that he was seen in Valence during the latter part of January, and the fact is adduced to show how deep and secret were his plans for preserving the double chance of an opening in either France or Corsica, as matters might turn out. The love-affair to which he refers in that thesis on the topic to which reference has been made would be an equally satisfactory explanation, considering his age. Whatever was the fact as to those few days, he was not absent long. The serious division between the executive in France and the new Assembly came to light in an ugly circumstance which occurred in March. On the eighteenth a French flotilla unexpectedly appeared off St. Florent. It was commanded by Rully, an ardent royalist, who had long been employed in Corsica. His secret instructions were to embark the French troops, and to leave the island to its fate. This was an adroit stab at the republicans of the Assembly; for, should the evacuation be secured, it was believed that either the radicals in Corsica would rise, overpower, and destroy the friends of France, call in English help, and diminish the number of democratic departments by one, or that Genoa would immediately step in and reassert her sovereignty. The moderates of St. Florent were not to be thus duped; sharp and angry discussions arose among both citizens and troops as to the obedience due to such orders, and soon both soldiers and townsfolk were in a frenzy of excitement. A collision between the two parties occurred, and Rully was killed. Papers were found on his person which proved that his sympathizers would gladly have abandoned Corsica to its fate. For the moment the young Corsicans were more devoted than ever to Paoli, since now only through his good offices with the French Assembly could a chance for the success of their plans be secured.

Such was the diversity of opinion as to ways and means, as to resources, opportunities, and details, that everything was, for the moment, in confusion. On April sixteenth Buonaparte applied for an extension of his furlough until the following October, on the plea of continued ill health, that he might drink the waters a second time at Orezza, whose springs, he explained, had shown themselves to be efficacious in his complaint. He may have been at that resort once before, or he may not. Doubtless the fever was still lingering in his system. What the degree of his illness was we cannot tell. It may have unfitted him for active service with his regiment; it did not disable him from pursuing his occupations in writing and political agitation. His request was granted on May twentieth. The history of Corsica was now finally revised, and a new dedication completed. This, with a letter and some chapters of the book, was forwarded to Raynal, probably by post. Joseph, who was one of the delegates to meet Paoli, would pass through Marseilles, wrote Napoleon to the abbé, and would hand him the rest if he should so desire. The text of the unlucky book was not materially altered. Its theory appears always to have been that history is but a succession of great names, and the story, therefore, is more a biographical record than a connected narrative. The dedication, however, is a new step in the painful progress of more accurate thinking and better expression; the additions to the volume contain, amid many immaturities and platitudes, some ripe and clever thought. Buonaparte's passion for his bantling is once more the ardor of a misdirected genius, unsullied by the desire for money, which had played a temporary part.

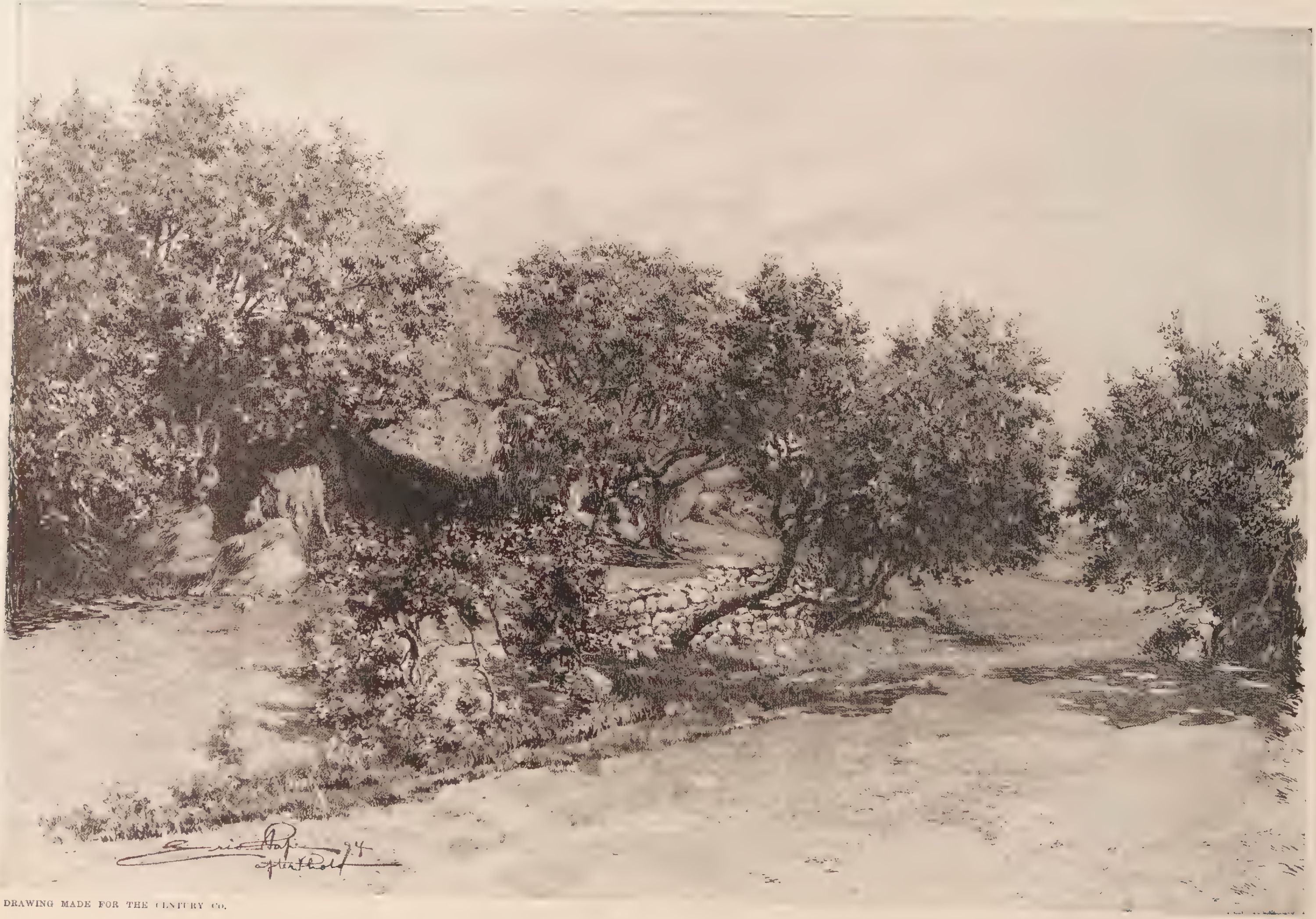
We know nothing definite of his pecuniary affairs, but somehow or other his fortunes must have mended. There is no other explanation of his numerous and costly journeys, and we hear that for a time he had money in his purse. In the will which he dictated at St. Helena is a bequest of one hundred thousand francs to the children of his friend who was the first mayor of Ajaccio by the popular will. It is not unlikely that the legacy was a grateful souvenir of advances made about this time. There is another possible explanation. The club of Ajaccio had chosen a delegation, of which Joseph Buonaparte was a member, to bring Paoli home from France. To meet its expenses, the municipality had forced the authorities of the priests' seminary to open their strong box and to hand over upward of two thousand francs. Napoleon may have shared Joseph's portion. We should be reminded in such a stroke, but with a difference, to be sure, of what happened when, a few years later, the hungry and ragged soldiers of the Republic were led into the fat plains of Lombardy.

The contemptuous attitude of the Ajaccio liberals toward the religion of Rome seriously alienated the superstitious populace from them. Buonaparte was once attacked in the public square by a procession organized to deprecate the policy of the National Assembly with regard to the ecclesiastical estates. One of the few royalist officials left in Corsica also took advantage of the general disorder to express his feelings plainly as to the acts of the same body. He was arrested, tried in Ajaccio, and acquitted by a sympathetic judge. At once the liberals took alarm; their club and the officials first protested, and then on June twenty-fifth assumed the offensive in the name of the Assembly. At last the opportunity to emulate the French cities seemed assured. It was determined to organize a local independent government, seize the citadel with the help of the home guard, and throw the hated royalists into prison. But the preparations were too open: the governor and most of his friends fled in season to their stronghold, and raised the drawbridge; the agitators could lay hands on but four of their enemies, among whom were the judge, the offender, and an officer of the garrison. So great was the disappointment of the radicals that they would have vented their spite on these; it was with difficulty that the lives of the prisoners were saved by the efforts of the militia officers. The garrison really sympathized with the insurgents, and would not obey orders to suppress the rising by an attack. In return for this forbearance the regular soldiers stipulated for the liberation of their officer. In the end the chief offenders among the radicals were punished by imprisonment or banished, and the tumult subsided; but the French officials now had strong support, not only from the hierarchy, as before, but from the plain pious people and their priests.

This result was a second defeat for Napoleon Buonaparte, who was almost certainly the instigator and leader of the uprising. He had been ready at any moment to assume the direction of affairs, but again the outcome of such a movement as could alone secure a possible temporary independence for Corsica and a military command for himself was absolutely naught. Little perturbed by failure, he took up the pen to write a proclamation justifying the action of the municipal authorities. The paper was fearlessly signed by himself and the other leaders, including the mayor. It execrates the sympathizers with the old order in France, and lauds the Assembly, with all its works; denounces those who sold the land to France, which could offer nothing but an end of the chain that bound herself; and warns the enemies of the new constitution that their day is over. There is a longing reference to the ideal self-determination which the previous attempt might have secured. The present rising is justified, however, as an effort to carry out the principles of the new charter. There are the same suggested force and suppressed fury as in his previous manifesto, the same fervid rhetoric, the same lack of coherence in expression. The same two elements, that of the eighteenth-century metaphysics and that of his own uncultured force, combine in the composition. Naturally enough, the unrest of the town was not diminished; there was even a slight collision between the garrison and the civil authorities.

Buonaparte was of course suspected and hated by Catholics and military alike. French officer though he was, no one in Corsica thought of him otherwise than as a Corsican revolutionist. Among his own friends he continued his unswerving career. It was he who wrote and read the address from Ajaccio to Paoli, although the two men did not meet until somewhat later. With the arrival of the great liberator the grasp of the old officials on the island relaxed, and the bluster of the few who had grown rich in the royal service ceased. The Assembly was finally triumphant; this new department was at last to be organized like those of the adoptive mother. It was high time, for the public order was seriously endangered in this transition period. The disturbances at Ajaccio were trifling compared with the revolutionary procedure inaugurated and carried to extremes in Bastia. Two letters of Napoleon's written in August display a feverish spirit of unrest in himself, and enumerate the many uprisings in the neighborhood with their varying degrees of success. Under provisional authority, arrangements were made, after some delay, to hold elections for the officials of the new system whose legal designation was directors. Their appointment and conduct would be determinative of Corsica's future, and were therefore of the highest importance.

In a pure democracy the voters assemble to deliberate and record their decisions. Such were the local district meetings in Corsica. These chose the representatives to the central constituent assembly, which was to meet at Orezza on September ninth, 1790. Joseph Buonaparte and Fesch were among the members sent from Ajaccio. The healing waters which Napoleon wished to quaff at Orezza were the influence of the debates. Although he could not be a member of the assembly on account of his youth, he was determined to be present. The three relatives traveled from their home in company, Joseph enchanted by the scenery, Napoleon studying the strategic points on the way. The village of Rostino, which Paoli had delicately chosen as his temporary home in order that his presence at Orezza might not unduly affect the course of events, was on their route. There occurred the meeting between the two great Corsicans, the man of ideas and the



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THE ENTRANCE TO THE GROTTO ON THE ESTATE OF MILELLI

THE PROPERTY OF NAPOLEON'S FATHER

man of action. No doubt Paoli was anxious to win a family so important and a patriot so ardent. In any case, he invited the three young men to accompany him over the fatal battle-ground of Ponte-Nuovo. If Napoleon's ambition had really been to become the chief of the French National Guard for Corsica, which would now, in all probability, be fully organized, it is very likely that he would have exerted himself to secure the favor of the only man who could fulfil his desire. There is, however, a tradition which tends to show quite the contrary: it is said that after Paoli had pointed out the disposition of his troops for the fatal conflict Napoleon dryly remarked, "The result of these arrangements was just what it was bound to be." Among the Emperor's reminiscences at the close of his life, he recalled this meeting, because Paoli had on that occasion declared him to be a man of ancient mold, like one of Plutarch's heroes.

The constituent assembly at Orezza sat for a month. Its sessions passed almost without any incident of importance except the first appearance of Napoleon as an orator in various public meetings held in connection with its labors. He is said to have been bashful and embarrassed in his beginnings, but, inspirited by each occasion, to have become more fluent, and finally to have won the attention and applause of his hearers. What he said is not known, but he spoke in Italian, and succeeded in his design of being at least a personage in the pregnant events now occurring. Both parties were represented in the proceedings and conclusions of the convention. Corsica was to constitute but a single department. Paoli was elected president of its directory and commander-in-chief of its National Guard, a combination of offices which again made him virtual dictator. He accepted them unwillingly, but the honors of a statue and an annual grant of ten thousand dollars, which were voted at the same time, he absolutely declined. The Paolist party secured the election of Canon Belce as vice-president, of Panatheri as secretary, of Arena as Salicetti's substitute, of Pozzo di Borgo and Gentili as members of the directory. Colonna, one of the delegates to the National Assembly, was a member of the same group. The younger patriots, or Young Corsica, as we should say now, perhaps, were represented by their delegate and leader Salicetti, who was chosen as plenipotentiary in Buttafuoco's place, and by Multedo, Gentili, and Pompei as members of the directory. For the moment, however, Paoli was Corsica, and such petty politics was significant only as indicating the survival of counter-currents. There was some dissent to a vote of censure passed upon the conduct of Buttafuoco and Peretti, but it was insignificant. Pozzo di Borgo and Gentili were chosen to declare at the bar of the National Assembly the devotion of Corsica to its purposes, and to the course of reform as represented by it. They were also to secure, if possible, both the permission to form a departmental National Guard, and the means to pay and arm it.

The choice of Pozzo di Borgo for a mission of such importance in preference to Joseph was a disappointment to the Buonapartes. In fact not one of the plans concerted by the two brothers succeeded. Joseph sustained the pretensions of Ajaccio to be capital of the island, but the honor was awarded to Bastia. He was not elected a member of the general directory, though he succeeded in being made a member for Ajaccio in the district directory. Whether to work off his ill humor, or from far-seeing purpose, Napoleon used the hours not spent in wire-pulling and listening to the proceedings of the assembly for making a series of excursions which were a virtual canvass of the neighborhood. The houses of the poorest were his resort; partly by his inborn power of pleasing, partly by diplomacy, he won their hearts and learned their inmost feelings. His purse, which was for the moment full, was open for their gratification in a way which moved them deeply. For years target-practice had been forbidden, as giving dangerous skill in the use of arms. Liberty having returned, Napoleon reorganized many of the old rural festivals in which contests of that nature had been the chief feature, offering prizes from his own means for the best marksmen among the youth. His success in feeling the pulse of public opinion was so great that he never forgot the lesson. Not long afterward, in the neighborhood of Valence,—in fact, to the latest times,—he courted the society of the lowly, and established, when possible, a certain intimacy with them. This gave him popularity, while at the same time it enabled him to obtain the most valuable indications of the general temper.

CHAPTER X

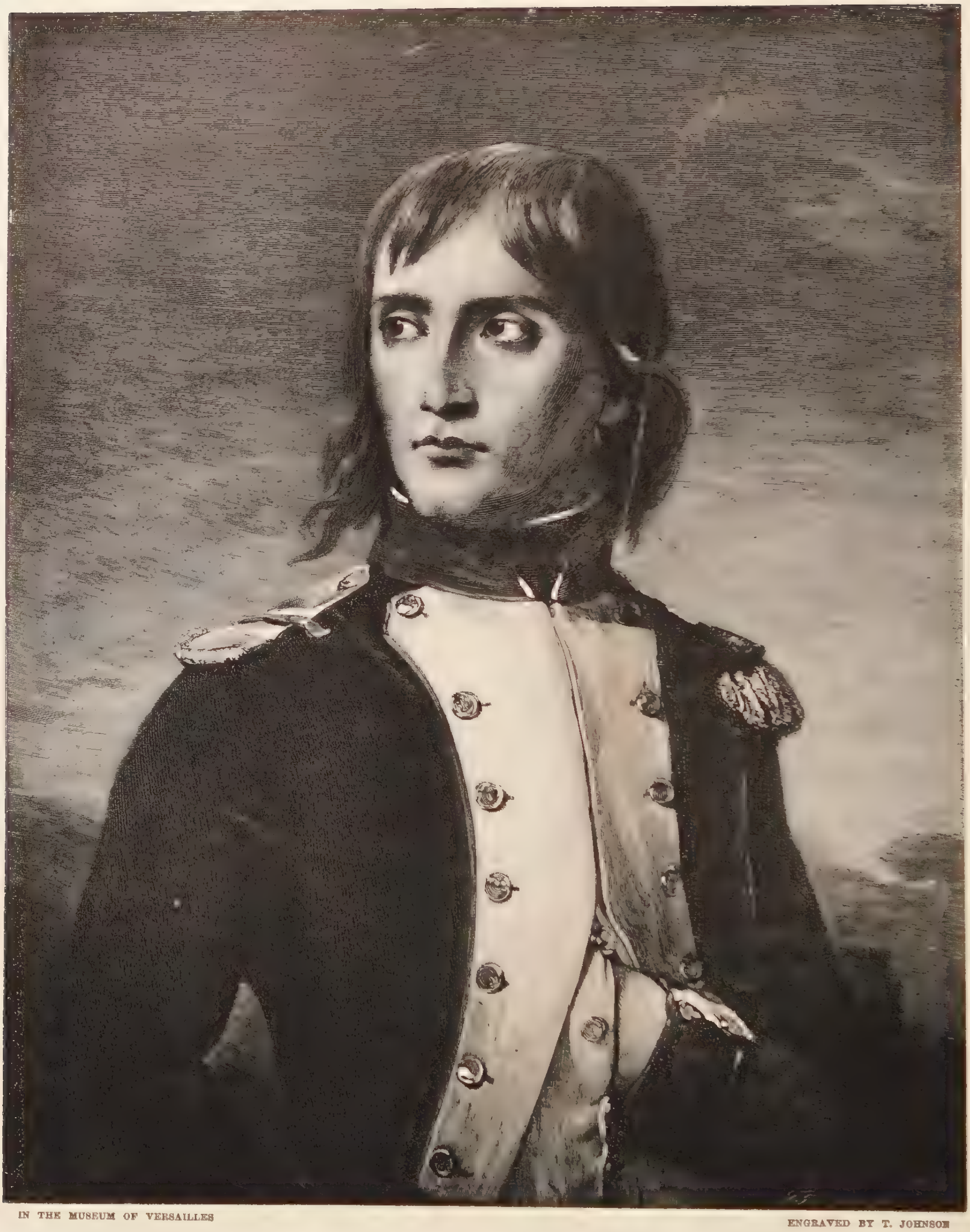
TRAITS OF CHARACTER

Literary Work—Essay on Happiness—Thwarted Ambition—The Corsican Patriots—The Brothers Napoleon and Louis—Studies in Politics—Reorganization of the Army—The Change in Public Opinion—Napoleon Again at Auxonne—Napoleon as a Teacher—Further Literary Efforts—The Sentimental Journey—His Attitude Toward Religion.

Chap. X
1791

ON his return to Ajaccio, the rising agitator continued as before to frequent his club. The action of the convention at Orezza in displacing Buttafuoco had inflamed the young politicians still more against the renegade. This effect was further heightened when it was known that, at the reception of their delegates by the National Assembly, the greater council had, under Mirabeau's leadership, virtually taken the same position regarding both him and his colleague. Napoleon had written, probably in the previous year, a notorious diatribe against Buttafuoco in the form of a letter to its object, and the very night on which the news from Paris was received, he seized the opportunity to read it before the club at Ajaccio. The paper, as now in existence, is pompously dated January twenty-third, 1791, from "my summer house of Milleli." This was a retreat on one of the little family properties, some miles from the town, where in the rocks was a grotto known familiarly as Milleli; Napoleon had improved and beautified the spot, using it, as he did his garden at Brienne, for contemplation and quiet study. Although the letter to Matteo Buttafuoco has been often printed, and was its author's first successful effort in writing, much emphasis should not be laid on it except in noting the better power to express tumultuous feeling, and in marking the implications which show an expansion of character. Insubordinate to France it certainly is, and intemperate; turgid, too, as any youth of twenty could well make it. No doubt, also, it was intended to secure notoriety for the writer. It makes clear the thorough apprehension its author had as to the radical character of the Revolution. It is his final and public renunciation of the royalist principles of Charles de Buonaparte. It contains also the last profession of morality which a youth is not ashamed to make before the cynicism of his own life becomes too evident for the castigation of selfishness and insincerity in others. Its substance is a just reproach to a selfish trimmer; the froth and scum are characteristic rather of the time and the circumstances than of the personality behind them. There is no further mention of a difference between the destinies of France and Corsica. To compare the pamphlet with even the poorest work of Rousseau, as has often been done, is absurd; to vilify it as ineffective trash is equally so.

As may be imagined, the "Letter" was received with mad applause, and ordered to be printed. It was now the close of January; Buonaparte's leave had expired on October fifteenth. On November sixteenth, after loitering a whole month beyond his time, he had secured a document from the Ajaccio officials certifying that both he and Louis were devoted to the new republican order, and bespeaking assistance for both in any difficulties which might arise. The busy Corsican perfectly understood that he might already at that time be regarded as a deserter in France, but still he continued his dangerous loitering. He had two objects in view, one literary, one political. Besides the successful "Letter" he had been occupied with a second composition, the notion of which had probably occupied him as his purse grew leaner. The jury before which this was to be laid was to be, however, not a heated body of young political agitators, but an association of old and mature men with calm, critical minds — the Lyons Academy. That society was finally about to award a prize of fifteen hundred livres founded by Raynal as long before as 1780 for the best thesis on the question: "Has the discovery of America been useful or hurtful to the human race? If the former, how shall we best preserve and increase the benefits? If the latter, how shall we remedy the evils?" Americans must regret that the learned body had been compelled for lack of interest in so concrete a subject to change the theme, and now offered in its place the question: "What truths and ideas should be inculcated in order best to promote the happiness of mankind?"



IN THE MUSEUM OF VERSAILLES

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF THE FIRST BATTALION OF CORSICA

FROM THE PAINTING BY H. E. F. PHILIPPOTEAUX

Napoleon's astounding paper on this remarkable theme was finished in December. It bears the marks of carelessness, haste, and over-confidence in every direction—in style, in content, and in lack of accuracy. "Illustrious Raynal," writes the author, "the question I am about to discuss is worthy of your graver, but without assuming to be steel of the same temper, I have taken courage, saying to myself with Correggio, I, too, am a painter." Thereupon follows a long encomium upon Paoli, whose principal merit is explained to have been that he strove in his legislation to keep for every man a property sufficient with moderate exertion on his own part for the sustenance of life. Happiness consists in living conformably to the constitution of our organization. Wealth is a misfortune, primogeniture a relic of barbarism, celibacy a reprehensible practice. Our animal nature demands food, shelter, clothing, and the companionship of woman. These are the essentials of happiness; but for its perfection we require both reason and sentiment. These theses are the tolerable portions, being discussed with some coherence. But much of the essay is mere meaningless rhetoric and bombast, which sounds like the effusion of a boyish rhapsodist. "At the sound of your [reason's] voice let the enemies of nature be still, and swallow their serpents' tongues in rage." "The eyes of reason restrain mankind from the precipice of the passions, as her decrees modify likewise the feeling of their rights." Many other passages of equal absurdity could be quoted, full of far-fetched metaphor, abounding in strange terms, straining rhetorical figures to distortion. And yet in spite of the bombast, certain essential Napoleonic ideas appear in the paper much as they endured to the end, namely, those on heredity, on the equal division of property, and on the nature of civil society. And there is one prophetic sentence which deserves to be quoted. "A disordered imagination! there lies the cause and source of human misfortune. It sends us wandering from sea to sea, from fancy to fancy, and when at last it grows calm, opportunity has passed, the hour strikes, and its possessor dies abhorring life." In later days the author threw what he probably supposed was the only existing manuscript of this vaporing effusion into the fire. But a copy of it had been made at Lyons, perhaps because one of the judges thought, as he said, that it "might have been written by a man otherwise gifted with common sense." Another has been found among the papers confided by Napoleon to Fesch. The proofs of authenticity are complete. It seems miraculous that its writer should have become, as he did, master of a concise and nervous style when once his words became the complement of his deeds.

The second cause for Buonaparte's delay in returning to France on the expiration of his furlough was his political and military ambition. This was suddenly quenched by the receipt of news that the Assembly at Paris would not create the longed-for National Guard, nor the ministry lend itself to any plan for circumventing the law. It was, therefore, evident that every chance of becoming Paoli's lieutenant was finally gone. By the advice of the president himself, therefore, Buonaparte determined to withdraw once more to France and to await results. Corsica was still distracted. A French official sent by the war department just at this time to report on its condition is not sparing of the language he uses to denounce the independent feeling and anti-French sympathies of the people. "The Italian," he says, "acquiesces, but does not forgive; an ambitious man keeps no faith, and estimates his life by his power." The agent further describes the Corsicans as so accustomed to unrest by forty years of anarchy that they would gladly seize the first occasion to throw off the domination of laws which restrain the social disorder. The Buonaparte faction, enumerated with the patriot brigand Zampaglini at their head, he calls "despicable creatures," "ruined in reputation and credit."

It would be hard to find a higher compliment to Paoli and his friends, considering the source from which these words emanated. They were all poor and they were all in debt. Even now, in the age of reform, they saw their most cherished plans thwarted by the presence in every town of garrisons the officers and men of which, though long resident in the island, and attached to its people by many ties, were nevertheless conservative in their feelings, and, by the instinct of their tradition and discipline, devoted to the still powerful official bureaus not yet destroyed by the Revolution. To replace these by a well-organized and equipped National Guard was now the most ardent wish of all patriots. There was nothing unworthy in Napoleon's longing for a command under the much desired but ever elusive reconstitution of a force armed according to the model furnished by France itself. Repeated disappointments like those he had suffered before, and was experiencing again, would have crushed a common man.

But the young author had his manuscripts in his pocket; one of them he had means and authority to publish. Perfectly aware, moreover, of the disorganization in the nation and the army, careless of the order fulminated on December second, 1790, against absent officers, which he knew to be aimed especially at the young nobles, who were deserting in troops, with his spirit undaunted, and his brain full of resources, he left Ajaccio on February first, 1791, having secured a new set of certificates as to his patriotism and devotion to the cause of the Revolution. Like the good son and the good brother which he had always been, he was not forgetful of his family. Life at his home had not become easier. Joseph, to be sure, had an office and a career, but the younger children were becoming a source of expense, and Lucien would not accept the provision which had been made for him. The next to be educated and placed was Louis, now between twelve and thirteen years old; accordingly Louis accompanied his brother. Napoleon had no promise, not even an outlook, for the boy; but he determined to have him at hand in case anything should turn up, and while waiting to give him from his own slender means whatever precarious education the times and circumstances could afford. We can understand the untroubled confidence of the boy; we must admire the trust, determination, and self-reliance of the elder brother.

Not only was there no punishment in store for Napoleon on his arrival at Auxonne, but there was considerate regard, and, later, promotion. The brothers had traveled slowly, stopping first for a short time at Marseilles, and then at Aix to visit friends, and wandering several days in a leisurely way through the parts of Dauphiny round about Valence. Associating again with the country people, and forming opinions as to the course of affairs, Buonaparte reopened his correspondence with Fesch on February eighth from the hamlet of Serves in order to acquaint him with the news and the prospects of the country, describing in particular the formation of patriotic societies by all the towns to act in concert for carrying out the decrees of the Assembly. This beginning of "federation for the Revolution," as it was called, in its spread finally welded the whole country, civil and even military authorities, together. Napoleon's presence in the time and place of its beginning explains much that followed. It was February thirteenth when he rejoined his regiment.

Comparatively short as had been the time of Buonaparte's absence, everything in France, even the army, had changed and was still changing. Step by step the most wholesome reforms were introduced as each in turn showed itself essential: promotion exclusively according to service among the lower officers; the same, with room for royal discretion, among the higher grades; division of the forces into regulars, reserves, and national guards, the two former to be still recruited by voluntary enlistment. The ancient and privileged constabulary, and many other formerly existing but inefficient armed bodies, were swept away, and the present system of gendarmerie was created. The military courts, too, were reconstituted under an impartial system of martial law. Simple numbers were substituted for the titular distinctions hitherto used by the regiments, and a fair schedule of pay, pensions, and military honors abolished all chance for undue favoritism. The necessity of compulsory enlistment was urged by a few with all the energy of powerful conviction, but the plan was dismissed as despotic. The Assembly debated as to whether, under the new system, king or people should wield the military power. They could find no satisfactory solution, and finally adopted a weak compromise which went far to destroy the power of Mirabeau, because carried through by him. The entire work of the commission was temporarily rendered worthless by these two essential defects—there was no way of filling the ranks, no strong arm to direct the system.

The first year of trial, 1790, had given the disastrous proof. By this time all monarchical and absolutist Europe was awakened against France; but a mere handful of enlightened men in England, and still fewer elsewhere, were in sympathy with her efforts. The stolid common sense of the rest saw only ruin ahead, and viewed askance the idealism of her unreal subtleties. The French nobles, sickened by the thought of reform, had continued their silly and wicked flight; the neighboring powers, now preparing for an armed resistance to the spread of the Revolution, were not slow to abet them in their schemes. On every border agencies for the encouragement of desertion were established, and by the opening of 1791 the effective fighting force was more than decimated. There was no longer any question of discipline; it was enough if any person worthy to command or serve could be retained. But the remedy for this disorganization was at hand. In the letter to Fesch, to which reference has already been made, Napoleon, after his observations among the people, wrote: "I have everywhere found the peasants firm in their stirrups [steadfast in their opinions], especially in Dauphiny. They are all disposed to perish in support of the constitution. I saw at Valence a resolute people, patriotic soldiers, and aristocratic officers. There are, however, some exceptions, for the president of the club is a captain named Du Cerbeau. He is captain in the regiment of Forez in garrison at Valence. . . . The women are everywhere royalist. It is not amazing; Liberty is a prettier woman than they, and eclipses them. All the parish priests of Dauphiny have taken the civic oath; they make sport of the bishop's outcry. . . . What is called good society is three fourths aristocratic—that is, they disguise themselves as admirers of the English constitution."

What a concise, terse sketch of that rising tide of national feeling which was soon to make good all defects and to fill all gaps in the new military system, put the army as part of the nation under the popular assembly, knit regulars, reserves, and home guard into one, and give moral support to enforcing the proposal for compulsory enlistment!

This movement was Buonaparte's opportunity. Declaring that he had twice endeavored since the expiration of his extended furlough to cross into France, he produced certificates to that effect from the authorities of Ajaccio, and begged for his pay and allowances since that date. His request was granted. It is impossible to deny the truth of his statement, or the genuineness of his certificates. But both were loose perversions of a half-truth, shifts palliated by the uncertainties of a revolutionary epoch. A habitual casuistry is further shown in an interesting letter written at the same time to a business friend of Joseph's at Châlons, in which there occurs a passage of double meaning, to the effect that his elder brother "hopes to come in person the following year as deputy to the National Assembly," which was no doubt true; for, in spite of being incapacitated by age, he had already sat in the Corsican convention and in the Ajaccio councils. But the imperfect French of the passage could also mean, and, casually read, does carry the idea, that Joseph, being already a deputy, would visit his friend the following year in person.

Buonaparte's connection with his old regiment was soon to be broken. He joined it on February thirteenth; he left it on June fourteenth. With these four months his total service was five years and nine months; but he had been absent, with or without leave, something more than half the time! His old friends in Auxonne were few in number, if there were any. No doubt his fellow-officers were tired of performing the absentee's duties, and of good-fellowship there could be in any case but little, with such difference of taste, politics, and fortune as there was between him and them. However, he made a few new friends; but it was in the main the old solitary life which he resumed. His own barrack-room was furnished with a wretched uncurtained couch, a table, and two chairs. Louis slept on a pallet in a closet near by. All pleasures but those of hope were utterly banished from those plucky lives, while they studied in preparation for the examination which might admit the younger to his brother's corps. The elder pinched and scraped to pay the younger's board; himself, according to his own account, brushing his own clothes that they might last longer, and supping often on dry bread. His only place of resort was the political club. One single pleasure he allowed himself — the occasional purchase of some long-coveted volume from the shelves of a town bookseller.

Of course neither authorship nor publication was forgotten. During these months were completed the two short pieces, a "Dialogue on Love," and the acute "Reflections on the State of Nature," from both of which quotations have already been given. "I too was once in love," he says of himself in the former. It could not well have been in Ajaccio, and it must have been the memories of the old Valence, of a pleasant existence now ended, which called forth the doleful confession. It was the future Napoleon who was presaged in the antithesis. "I go further than the denial of its existence; I believe it hurtful to society, to the individual welfare of men." The other trenchant document demolishes the cherished hypothesis of Rousseau as to man in a state of nature. The precious manuscripts brought from Corsica were sent to the only publisher in the neighborhood, at Dôle. The much-revised history was refused; the other — whether by moneys furnished from the Ajaccio club, or at the author's risk, is not known — was printed in a slim octavo volume of twenty-one pages, and published with the title, "Letter of Buonaparte to Buttafuoco."

Short as was Buonaparte's residence at Auxonne, he availed himself to the utmost of the slackness of discipline in order to gratify his curiosity as to the state of the country. He paid frequent visits to Marmont in Dijon, and he made what he called at St. Helena his "Sentimental Journey to Nuits" in Burgundy. The account he gave Las Cases of the aristocracy in the latter city, and its assemblies at the mansion of a wine-merchant's widow, is most entertaining. To his host Gassendi and to the worthy mayor he aired his radical doctrines with great complacence, but according to his own account he had not the best of it in the discussions which ensued. Under the empire Gassendi's son was a member of the council of state, and in one of its sessions he dared to support some of his opinions by quoting Napoleon himself. The Emperor remembered perfectly the conversation at Nuits, but meaningly said that his friend must have been asleep and dreaming.

Several traditions which throw some light on Buonaparte's attitude toward religion date from this last residence in Auxonne. He had been prepared for confirmation at Brienne by a confessor who was now in retirement at Dôle, the same to whom when First Consul he wrote an acknowledgment of his indebtedness, adding: "Without religion there is no happiness, no future possible. I commend me to your prayers." The dwelling of this good man was the frequent goal of his walks abroad. Again, he once jocularly asked a friend who visited him in his room, if he had heard mass that morning, opening, as he spoke, a trunk in which was the complete vestment of a priest. The regimental chaplain, who must have been his friend, had confided it to him for safe keeping. Finally, it was in these dark and never-forgotten days of trial that Louis was confirmed, probably by the advice of his brother. Even though Napoleon had collaborated with Fesch in the paper on the oath of priests to the constitution, though he himself had been mobbed in Corsica as the enemy of the Church, it does not appear that he had any other than decent and reverent feelings toward religion and its professors.

CHAPTER XI

THE REVOLUTION IN THE RHONE VALLEY

A Dark Period — Bonaparte, First Lieutenant — Second Sojourn in Valence — Books and Reading — The National Assembly of France — The King Returns from Versailles — Administrative Reforms in France — Passing of the Old Order — Flight of the King — Bonaparte's Oath to Sustain the Constitution — His View of the Situation — His Revolutionary Zeal — A Serious Blunder Avoided — Return to Corsica.

Chap. XI
1791

THE tortuous course of Napoleon's life for the years from 1791 to 1795 has been neither described nor understood by those who have written in his interest. It was his own desire that his biographies, in spite of the fact that his public life began after Rivoli, should commence with the recovery of Toulon for the Convention. His detractors, on the other hand, have studied this prefatory period with such evident bias that dispassionate readers have been repelled from its consideration. And yet the sordid tale well repays perusal; for in this epoch of his life many of his characteristic qualities were tempered and ground to the keen edge they retained throughout. Swept onward toward the trackless ocean of political chaos, the youth seemed afloat without oars or compass: in reality, his craft was well under control, and his chart correct. Whether we attribute his conduct to accident or to design, from an adventurer's point of view the instinct which made him spread his sails to the breezes of Jacobin favor was quite as sound as that which later, when Jacobinism came to be abhorred, made him anxious that the fact should be forgotten.

In the earlier stages of army reorganization, changes were made without much regard to personal merit, the dearth of efficient officers being such that even the most indifferent had some value. About the first of June, 1791, Buonaparte was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, with a salary of thirteen hundred livres, and transferred to the Fourth Regiment, which was in Valence. He heard the news with mingled feelings: promotion was, of course, welcome, but he shrank from returning to his former station, and from leaving the three or four warm friends he had among his comrades in the old regiment. On the ground that the arrangements he had made for educating Louis would be disturbed by the transfer, he besought the war office for permission to remain at Auxonne with his old regiment, now known as the First. Probably the real ground of his disinclination was the fear that a residence at Valence might revive the painful emotions which time had somewhat withered. He may also have felt how discordant the radical opinions he was beginning to hold would be with those still cherished by his former friends. But the authorities were inexorable, and on June fourteenth the brothers departed, Napoleon for the first time leaving debts which he could not discharge: for the new uniform of a first lieutenant, a sword, and some wood, he owed about a hundred and fifteen livres. This sum he was careful to pay within a few years and as soon as his affairs permitted.

Arrived at Valence, he found that the old society had vanished. Both the bishop and the abbé of Saint-Ruff were dead. Mme. du Colombier had withdrawn with her daughter to her country-seat. The brothers were able, therefore, to take up their lives just where they had made the break at Auxonne: Louis pursuing the studies necessary for entrance to the corps of officers, Napoleon teaching him, and frequenting the political club; both destitute and probably suffering, for the officer's pay was soon far in arrears. In such desperate straits it was a relief for the elder brother that the allurements of his former associations were dissipated; such companionship as he now had was among the middle and lower classes, whose estates were more proportionate to his own, and whose sentiments were virtually identical with those which he professed.

The list of books which he read is significant: Coxe's "Travels in Switzerland," Duclos's "Memoirs of the Reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV.," Machiavelli's "History of Florence," Voltaire's "Essay on Manners," Duvernet's "History of the Sorbonne," Le Noble's "Spirit of Gerson," and Dulaure's "History of the Nobility." There exist among his papers outlines more or less complete of all these books. They prove that he understood what he read, but unlike other similar jottings by him they give little evidence of critical power. Aside from such historical studies as would explain the events preliminary to that revolutionary age upon which he saw that France was entering, he was carefully examining the attitude of the Gallican Church toward the claims of the papacy, and considering the rôle of the aristocracy in society. It is clear that he had no intention of being merely a curious onlooker at the successive phases of the political and social transmutation already beginning; he was bent on examining causes, comprehending reasons, and sharing in the movement itself.

By the summer of 1791 the first stage in the transformation of France had almost passed. The reign of moderation in reform was nearly over. The National Assembly had apprehended the magnitude but not the nature of its task, and was unable to grasp the consequences of the new constitution it had outlined. The nation was sufficiently familiar with the idea of the crown as an executive, but hitherto the executive had been at the same time legislator; neither King nor people quite knew how the King was to obey the nation when the former, trained in the school of the strictest absolutism, was deprived of all volition, and the latter gave its orders through a single chamber, responsive to the levity of the masses, and controlled neither by an absolute veto power, nor by any feeling of responsibility to a calm public opinion. This was the urgent problem which had to be solved under conditions the most unfavorable that could be conceived.

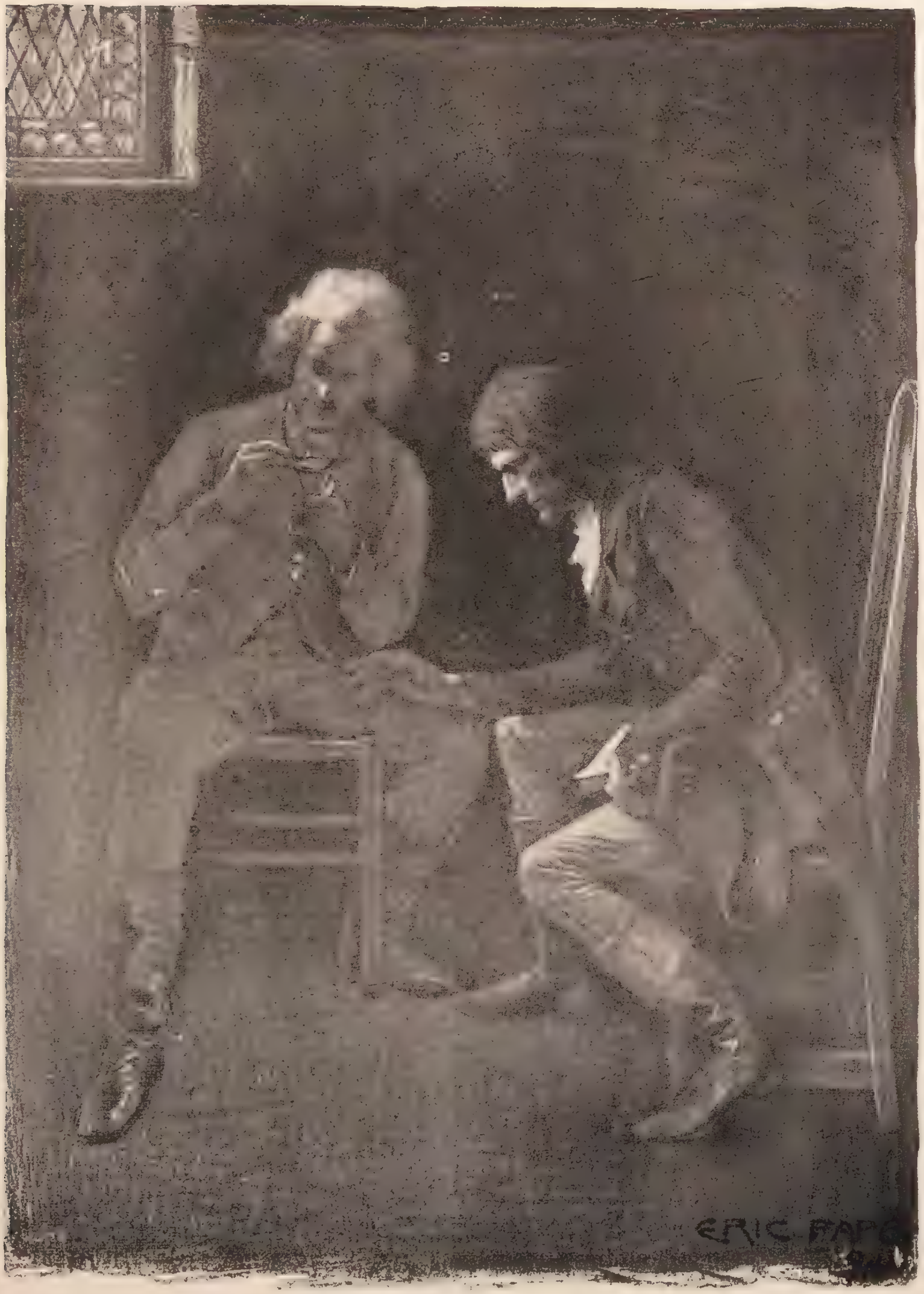
During the autumn of 1789 famine was actually stalking abroad. The Parisian populace grew gaunt and dismal, but the King and aristocracy at Versailles had food in plenty, and the contrast was heightened by a lavish display in the palace. The royal family was betrayed by one of its own house, the despicable Philip "Égalité," who sought to stir up the basest dregs of society, that in the ferment he might rise to the top; hungry Paris, stung to action by rumors which he spread and by bribes which he lavished, put Lafayette at its head, and on October fifth marched out to the gates of the royal residence in order to make conspicuous the contrast between its own sufferings and the wasteful comfort of its servants, as the King and his ministers were now considered to be. Louis and the National Assembly yielded to the menace, the court returned to Paris, politics grew hotter and more bitter, the fickleness of the mob became a stronger power. Soon the

Jacobin Club began to wield the mightiest single influence, and as it did so it grew more and more radical.

Throughout the long and trying winter the masses remained, nevertheless, quietly expectant. There was much tumultuous talk, but action was suspended while the Assembly sat and struggled to solve its problem, elaborating a really fine paper constitution. Unfortunately, the provisions of the document had no relation to the political habits of the French nation, or to the experience of England and the United States, the only free governments then in existence. Feudal privilege, feudal provinces, feudal names having been obliterated, the whole of France was rearranged into administrative departments, with geographical in place of historical boundaries. It was felt that the ecclesiastical domains, the holders of which were considered as mere trustees, should be adapted to the same plan, and this was done. Ecclesiastical as well as aristocratic control was thus removed by the stroke of a pen. In other words, by the destruction of the mechanism through which the temporal and spiritual authorities exerted the remnants of their power, they were both completely paralyzed. The King was denied all initiative, being granted merely a suspensive veto, and in the reform of the judicial system the prestige of the lawyers was also destroyed. Royalty was turned into a function, and the courts were stripped of both the moral and physical force necessary to compel obedience to their decrees. Every form of the guardianship to which for centuries the people had been accustomed was thus removed — royal, aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and judicial. Untrained to self-control, they were as ready for mad excesses as were the German Anabaptists after the Reformation or the English sectaries after the execution of Charles.

Attention has been called to the disturbances which arose in Auxonne and elsewhere, to the emigration of the nobles from that quarter, to the utter break between the parish priests and the higher church functionaries in Dauphiny; this was but a sample of the whole. When, on July fourteenth, 1790, the King accepted a constitution which decreed a secular reorganization of the ecclesiastical hierarchy according to the terms of which both bishops and priests were to be elected by the taxpayers, two thirds of all the clergy in France refused to swear allegiance to it. All attempts to establish the new administrative and judicial systems were more or less futile; the disaffection of officials and lawyers became more intense. In Paris alone the changes were introduced with some success, the municipality being rearranged into forty-eight sections, each with a primary assembly. These were the bodies which later gave Buonaparte the opening whereby he entered his real career. The influence of the Jacobin Club increased, just in proportion as the majority of its members grew more radical. Necker trimmed to their demands, but lost popularity by his monotonous calls for money, and fell in September, reaching his home on Lake Leman only with the greatest difficulty. Mirabeau succeeded him as the sole possible prop to the tottering throne. Under his leadership the moderate monarchists, or Feuillants, as they were later called from the convent of that order to which they withdrew, seceded from the Jacobins, and before the Assembly had ceased its work the land was cleft in two, divided into opponents and adherents of monarchy. As if to insure the disasters of such an antagonism, the Assembly, which numbered among its members every man in France of ripe political experience, committed the incredible folly of self-effacement, voting that not one of its members should be eligible to the legislature about to be chosen.

A new impulse to the revolutionary movement was given by the death of Mirabeau on April second, 1791. His obsequies were celebrated in many places, and, being a native of Provence, there were probably solemn ceremonies at Valence. There is a tradition that they occurred during Buonaparte's second residence in the city, and that it was he who superintended the draping of the choir in the principal church. It is said that the hangings were arranged to represent a funerary urn, and that beneath, in conspicuous letters, ran the legend: "Behold what remains of the French Lycurgus." Mirabeau had indeed displayed a genius for politics, his scheme for a strong ministry, chosen from the Assembly, standing in bold relief against the feebleness of Necker in persuading Louis to accept the suspensive veto, and to choose his cabinet without relation to the party in power. When the mad dissipation of the statesman's youth demanded its penalty at the hour so critical for France, the King and the moderates alike lost courage. In June the worried and worn-out monarch determined that the game was not worth the playing, and on the twenty-first he fled. Though he was captured, and brought back to act the impossible rôle of a democratic prince, the patriots who had wished to advance with



DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

BONAPARTE PAWNING HIS WATCH

FROM THE DRAWING BY ERIC PAPE

Bourrienne, his early friend and companion in Paris, relates this incident

experience and tradition as guides were utterly discredited. All the world could see how pusillanimous was the royalty they had wished to preserve, and the masses made up their mind that, real or nominal, the institution was not only useless, but dangerous. This feeling was strong in the Rhone valley and the adjoining districts, which have ever been the home of extreme radicalism. Sympathy with Corsica and the Corsicans had long been active in southeastern France. Neither the island nor its people were felt to be strange. When a society for the defense of the constitution was formed in Valence, Buonaparte, though a Corsican, was at first secretary, then president, of the association.

The "Friends of the Constitution" grew daily more numerous, more powerful, and more radical in that city; and when the great solemnity of swearing allegiance to the new order was to be celebrated, it was chosen as a convenient and suitable place for a convention of twenty-two similar associations from the neighboring districts. The meeting took place on July third, 1791; the official administration of the oath to the civil, military, judicial, and ecclesiastical authorities occurred on the fourteenth. Before a vast altar erected on the drill-ground, in the presence of all the dignitaries, with cannon booming and the air resounding with shouts and patriotic songs, the officials in groups, the people in mass, swore with uplifted hands to sustain the constitution, to obey the National Assembly, and to die, if need be, in defending French territory against invasion. Scenes as impressive and dramatic as this occurred all over France. They appealed powerfully to the imagination of the nation, and profoundly influenced public opinion. "Until then," said Buonaparte, referring to the solemnity, "I doubt not that if I had received orders to turn my guns against the people, habit, prejudice, education, and the King's name would have induced me to obey. With the taking of the national oath it became otherwise; my instincts and my duty were thenceforth in harmony."

But the position of liberal officers was still most trying. In the streets and among the people they were in a congenial atmosphere; behind the closed doors of the drawing-rooms, in the society of ladies, and among their fellows in the mess, there were constraint and suspicion. Out of doors all was exultation; in the houses of the hitherto privileged classes all was sadness and uncertainty. But everywhere, indoors or out, was spreading the fear of war, if not civil at least foreign war, with the

French emigrants as the allies of the assailants. On this point Buonaparte was mistaken. As late as July twenty-seventh, 1791, he wrote to Naudin, an intimate friend who was chief of the military bureau at Auxonne: "Will there be war? No; Europe is divided between sovereigns who rule over men and those who rule over cattle and horses. The former understand the Revolution, and are terrified; they would gladly make personal sacrifices to annihilate it, but they dare not lift the mask for fear the fire should break out in their own houses. See the history of England, Holland, etc. Those who bear the rule over horses misunderstand and cannot grasp the bearing of the constitution. They think this chaos of incoherent ideas means an end of French power. You would suppose, to listen to them, that our brave patriots were about to cut one another's throats, and with their blood purge the land of the crimes committed against kings." The news contained in this letter is most interesting. There are accounts of the zeal and spirit everywhere shown by the democratic patriots, of a petition for the trial of the King sent up from the recent meeting at Valence, and an assurance by the writer that his regiment is "sure," except as to half the officers. He adds in a postscript: "Southern blood courses in my veins as swiftly as the Rhone. Pardon me if you feel distressed in reading my scrawl."

Restlessness is the habit of the agitator, and Buonaparte's temperament was not exceptional. His movements and purposes during the months of July and August are very uncertain in the absence of documentary evidence sufficient to determine them. But his earliest biographers, following what was in their time a comparatively short tradition, enable us to fix some things with a high degree of probability. The young radical had been but two months with his new command when he began to long for change; the fever of excitement and the discomfort of his life, with probably some inkling that a Corsican national guard would ere long be organized, awakened in him a purpose to be off once more, and accordingly he applied for leave of absence. His colonel, a very lukewarm constitutionalist, angry at the notoriety which his lieutenant was acquiring, had already sent in a complaint of Buonaparte's insubordinate spirit and of his inattention to duty. Standing on a formal right, he therefore refused the application. With the quick resource of a schemer, Buonaparte turned to a higher authority, his friend Duteil, who was inspector-general of artillery in the department and not unfavorable. Something, however, must have occurred to cause delay, for weeks passed and the desired leave was not granted.

While awaiting a decision the applicant was very uneasy. To friends he said that he would soon be in Paris; to his great-uncle he wrote, "Send me three hundred livres; that sum would take me to Paris. There, at least, a person can show himself, overcome obstacles. Everything tells me that I shall succeed there. Will you stop me for lack of a hundred crowns?" And again: "I am waiting impatiently for the six crowns my mother owes me; I need them sadly." These demands for money met with no response. The explanation of Buonaparte's impatience is simple enough. One by one the provincial societies which had been formed to support the constitution were affiliating themselves with the influential Jacobins at Paris, who were now the strongest single political power in the country. He was the recognized leader of their sympathizers in the Rhone valley. He evidently intended to go to headquarters and see for himself what the outlook was. With backers such as he thus hoped to find, some advantage, perhaps even the long-desired command in Corsica, might be secured.

It was rare good fortune that the young hotspur was not yet to be cast into the seething caldron of French politics. The time was not yet ripe for the exercise of his powers. The storming of the Bastille had symbolized the overthrow of privilege and absolute monarchy; the flight of the King presaged the overthrow of monarchy, absolute or otherwise. The executive gone, the legislature popular and democratic but ignorant how to administer or conduct affairs, the judiciary equally disorganized, and the army transforming itself into a patriotic organization—was there more to come? Yes. Thus far, in spite of well-meant attempts to substitute new constructions for the old, all had been disintegration. French society was to be reorganized only after further pulverizing; cohesion would begin only under pressure from without—a pressure applied by the threats of erratic royalists that they would bring in the foreign powers to coerce and arbitrate, by the active demonstrations of the emigrants, by the outbreak of foreign wars. These were the events about to take place; they would in the end evolve from the chaos of mob rule first the irregular and temporary dictatorship of the Convention, then the tyranny of the Directory; at the same time they would infuse a fervor of patriotism into the whole mass of the French nation, stunned, helpless, and leaderless, but loyal, brave, and vigorous. In such a crisis the people would tolerate, if not demand, a leader strong to exact respect for France and to enforce his commands; would prefer the vigorous mastery of one to the feeble misrule of the many or the few. Still further, the man was as unready as the time; for it was, in all probability, not as a Frenchman but as an ever true Corsican patriot that Buonaparte wished to "show himself, overcome obstacles" at this conjuncture.

On August fourth, 1791, the National Assembly at last decided to form a paid volunteer national guard of a hundred thousand men, and their decision became a law on August twelfth. The term of enlistment was a year; four battalions were to be raised in Corsica. Buonaparte heard of the decision on August tenth, and was convinced that the hour for realizing his long-cherished aspirations had finally struck. He could certainly have done much in Paris to secure office in a French-Corsican national guard, and with this in mind he immediately wrote a memorandum on the armament of the new force, addressing it, with characteristic assurance, to the Minister of War. When, however, three weeks later, on August thirtieth, 1791, a leave of absence arrived, to which he was entitled in the course of routine, and which was not granted by the favor of any one, he had abandoned all idea of service under France in the Corsican guard. The disorder of the times was such that while retaining office in the French army he could test in an independent Corsican command the possibility of climbing to leadership there before abandoning his present subordinate place in France. In view, apparently, of this new venture, he had for some time been taking advances from the regimental paymaster, until he had now in hand a considerable sum—two hundred and ninety livres. A formal announcement to the authorities might have elicited embarrassing questions from them, so he and Louis quietly departed without explanations, leaving for the second time debts of considerable amount. They reached Ajaccio on September sixth, 1791. Napoleon was not actually a deserter, but he had in contemplation a step toward the defiance of French authority—the acceptance of service in a Corsican military force.

CHAPTER XII

BONAPARTE THE CORSICAN JACOBIN

BONAPARTE'S CORSICAN PATRIOTISM—HIS POSITION IN HIS FAMILY—CORSICAN POLITICS—HIS POSITION IN THE JACOBIN CLUB OF AJACCIO—HIS FAILURE AS A CONTESTANT FOR LITERARY HONORS—APPOINTED ADJUTANT-GENERAL—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD FRANCE—HIS NEW AMBITIONS—USE OF VIOLENCE—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF VOLUNTEERS—POLITICS IN AJACCIO—BONAPARTE'S FIRST EXPERIENCE OF STREET WARFARE—HIS MANIFESTO—DISMISSED TO PARIS—HIS PLANS—THE POSITION OF LOUIS XVI.—BONAPARTE'S DELINQUENCIES—DISORGANIZATION IN THE ARMY—PETITION FOR REINSTATEMENT—THE MARSEILLAIS—BONAPARTE A SPECTATOR—HIS ESTIMATE OF FRANCE—HIS PRESENCE AT THE SCENES OF AUGUST TENTH—STATE OF PARIS.

CHAP. XII
1791–92

THIS was the third time in four years that Buonaparte had revisited his home. On the plea of ill health he had been able the first time to remain a year and two months, giving full play to his Corsican patriotism and his own ambitions by attendance at Orezza, and by political agitation among the people. The second time he had remained a year and four months, retaining his hold on his commission by subterfuges and irregularities which, though condoned, had strained his relations with the ministry of war in Paris. He had openly defied the royal authority, relying on the coming storm for the concealment of his conduct if it should prove reprehensible, or for preferment in his own country if Corsica should secure her liberties. There is no reason, therefore, to suppose that his intentions for the third visit were different from those displayed in the other two, although again solicitude for his family was doubtless one of many considerations.

During Napoleon's absence from Corsica the condition of his family had not materially changed. Soon after his arrival the old archdeacon died, and his little fortune fell to the Buonapartes. Joseph, failing shortly afterward in his plan of being elected deputy to the French legislature, was chosen a member of the Corsican directory. He was, therefore, forced to occupy himself entirely with his new duties and to live at Corte. Fesch, as the eldest male, the mother's brother, and a priest at that, expected to assume the direction of the family affairs. But he was doomed to speedy disenchantment: thenceforward Napoleon was the family dictator. In conjunction with his uncle he used the whole or a considerable portion of the archdeacon's savings for the purchase of several estates from the national domain, as the sequestrated lands of the monasteries were called. Rendered thus more self-important, he talked much in the home circle concerning the greatness of classical antiquity, and wondered "who would not willingly have been stabbed, if only he could have been Cæsar? One feeble ray of his glory would be an ample recompense for sudden death." Such chances for Cæsarism as the island of Corsica afforded were very rapidly becoming better.

During the last few months religious agitation had been steadily increasing. Pious Catholics were embittered by the virtual expulsion of the old clergy, and the induction to office of new priests who had sworn to uphold the constitution. Amid the disorders of administration the people in ever larger numbers had secured arms; as of yore, they appeared at their assemblies under the guidance of their chiefs, ready to fight at a moment's notice. It was but a step to violence, and without any other provocation than religious exasperation the townsfolk of Bastia had lately sought to kill their new bishop. Even Arena, who had so recently seized the town in Paoli's interest, was now regarded as a French radical, maltreated, and banished with his supporters to Italy. The new election was at hand; the contest between the Paolists and the extreme French party grew hotter and hotter. Deputies to the new assembly, and superior officers of the new guard, were to be elected. Buonaparte, being only a lieutenant of the regulars, could according to the law aspire no higher than an appointment as adjutant-major with the title and pay of captain. It was not worth while to lose his place in France for this, so he determined to stand for one of the higher elective offices, that of lieutenant-colonel, a position which would give him more power, and, under the latest legislation, entitle him to retain his grade in the regular army.

There were now two political clubs in Ajaccio: that of the Corsican Jacobins, country people for the most part; and that of the Corsican Feuillants, composed of the officials and townsfolk. Buonaparte became a moving spirit in the former, and determined at any cost to destroy the influence of the latter. The two previous attempts to secure Ajaccio for the radicals had failed: a third was already under consideration. The new leader began to garnish his language with those fine and specious phrases which thenceforth were never wanting in his utterances at revolutionary crises. "Law," he wrote about this time, "is like those statues of some of the gods which are veiled under certain circumstances." For a few weeks there was little or nothing to do in the way of electioneering at home; he therefore obtained permission to travel with the famous Volney, who had been chosen director of commerce and manufactures in the island. This journey was for a candidate like Buonaparte invaluable as a means of observation and of winning friends for his cause.

Before the close of this trip his furlough had expired, his regiment had been put on a war footing, and orders had been issued for the return of every officer to his post by Christmas day. But in the execution of his fixed purpose the young Corsican patriot was heedless of military obligations to France, and wilfully remained absent from duty. Once more the spell of a wild, free life was upon him; he was enlisted for the campaign, though without position or money to back him. The essay on happiness which he had presented to the Academy of Lyons had failed, as a matter of course, to win the prize, one of the judges pronouncing it "too badly arranged, too uneven, too disconnected, and too badly written to deserve attention." This decision was a double blow, for it was announced about this time, at a moment when fame and money would both have been most welcome. The scanty income from the lands purchased with the legacy of the old archdeacon remained the only resource of the family for the lavish hospitality which, according to immemorial, semi-barbarous tradition, was required of a Corsican candidate.

A peremptory order was now issued from Paris that those officers of the line who had been serving in the National Guard with a grade lower than that of lieutenant-colonel should return to regular service before April first, 1792. Here was an implication which might be turned to account. As a lieutenant on leave, Buonaparte should of course have returned on December twenty-fifth; if, however, he were an officer of volunteers he could plead the new order. Though as yet the recruits had not come in, and no companies had been formed, the mere idea was sufficient to suggest a means for saving appearances. An appointment as adjutant-major was solicited from the major-general in command of the department, and he, under authorization obtained in due time from Paris, granted it. Safe from the charge of desertion thus far, it was essential for his reputation and for his ambition that Buonaparte should be elected lieutenant-colonel. Success would enable him to plead that his first lapse in discipline was due to irregular orders from his superior, that anyhow he had been an adjutant-major, and that finally the position of lieutenant-colonel gave him immunity from punishment, and left him blameless.

He nevertheless was uneasy, and wrote two letters of a curious character to his friend Sucy, the commissioner-general at Valence. In the first, written five weeks after the expiration of his leave, he calmly reports himself, and gives an account of his occupations, mentioning incidentally that unforeseen circumstances, duties the dearest and most sacred, had prevented his return. In the second he plumply declares that in perilous times the post of a good Corsican is at home, that therefore he had thought of resigning, but his friends had arranged the middle course of appointing him adjutant-major in the volunteers so that he could make his duty as a soldier conform to his duty as a patriot. Asking for news of what is going on in France, he says, writing like an outsider, "If your nation loses courage at this moment, it is done with forever."

It was toward the end of March that the volunteers from the mountains began to appear in Ajaccio for the election of their officers. Napoleon had bitter and powerful rivals, but his recent trip had apparently enabled him to win many friends among the men. While, therefore, success was possible by that means, there was another influence almost as powerful—that of three commissioners appointed by the directory of the island to organize and equip the battalion. With skilful diplomacy Buonaparte agreed that he would not presume to be a candidate for the office of first lieutenant-colonel, which was to go to Peretti, a near friend of Paoli, but would seek the position of second lieutenant-colonel. In this way he was assured of good will from two of the three commissioners; the other was hostile, being a partizan of Peraldi, the rival candidate. Peretti himself declared in favor of a nobody, his brother-in-law, Quenza.

The election, as usual in Corsica, seems to have passed in turbulence and noisy violence. The third commissioner, living as a guest with Peraldi, was seized during the night preceding the election by a body of Buonaparte's friends, and put under lock and key in their candidate's house — "to make you entirely free; you were not free where you were," said the instigator of the stroke, when called to explain. To the use of fine phrases was now added a facility in employing violence at a pinch which likewise remained characteristic of Buonaparte's career down to the end. There is a story that in one of the scuffles incident to this brawl a member of Pozzo di Borgo's family was thrown down and trampled on. Be that as it may, Buonaparte was successful, and from that moment the families of Peraldi and of Pozzo di Borgo were his deadly enemies.

As it turned out, the insignificant Quenza, and not Peretti, was chosen first lieutenant-colonel. Buonaparte, therefore, was in virtual command of a sturdy, well-armed, legal force. Having been adjutant-major, and being now a regularly elected lieutenant-colonel according to statute, he applied, with a well-calculated effrontery, to his regimental paymaster for the pay which had accrued during his absence. It was at first refused, for in the interval he had been cashiered for remaining at home in disobedience to orders; but such were the irregularities of that revolutionary time that later, virtual deserter as he had been, it was actually paid. No one was more adroit than Buonaparte in taking advantage of possibilities. He was a pluralist without conscience. A French regular if the emergency should demand it, he was likewise a Corsican patriot and commander in the volunteer guard of the island, fully equipped for another move. Perhaps, at last, he could assume with success the liberator's rôle of Sampiero. But an opportunity must occur or be created. One was easily arranged.

Ajaccio had gradually become a resort for many ardent Roman Catholics who had refused to accept the new order. The town authorities, although there were some extreme radicals among them, were, on the whole, in sympathy with these conservatives. Through the devices of his friends in the city government, Buonaparte's battalion, the second, was on one pretext or another assembled in and around the town. Thereupon, according to the most probable account, which is supported by Buonaparte's own story, a demand was made that according to the recent ecclesiastical legislation of the National Assembly, the Capuchin monks, who had been so far undisturbed, should evacuate their friary. Feeling ran so high that the other volunteer companies were summoned; they arrived on April first. At once the public order was jeopardized: on one extreme were the religious fanatics, on the other the political agitators, both of whom were loud with threats and ready for violence. In the middle, between two fires, was the mass of the people, who sympathized with the ecclesiastics, but wanted peace at any hazard. Quarreling began first between individuals of the various factions, but it soon resulted in conflicts between civilians and the volunteer guard. The first step taken by the military was to seize and occupy the cloister, which lay just below the citadel, the final goal of their leader, whoever he was, and the townsfolk believed it was Buonaparte. Once inside the citadel walls, the Corsicans in the regular French service would, it was hoped, fraternize with their kin; with such a beginning all the garrison might in time be won over.

This further exasperated the ultramontanes, and on Easter day, April eighth, they made demonstrations so serious that the scheming commander—Buonaparte again, it was believed—found the much desired pretext to interfere; there was a mêlée, and one of the militia officers was killed. Next morning the burghers found their town beset by the volunteers. Good citizens kept to their houses, while the acting mayor and the council were assembled to authorize an attack on the citadel. The authorities could not agree, and dispersed; the following forenoon it was discovered that the acting mayor and his sympathizers had taken refuge in the citadel. From the vantage of this stronghold they proposed to settle the difficulty by the arbitration of a board composed of two from each side, under the presidency of the commandant. There was again no agreement.

Worn out at last by the haggling and delay, an officer of the garrison finally ordered the militia officers to withdraw their forces. By the advice of some determined radical—Buonaparte again in all probability—the latter flatly refused, and the night was spent in preparation for a conflict which seemed inevitable. But early in the morning the commissioners of the department, who had been sent by Paoli to preserve the peace, arrived in a body. They were welcomed gladly by the majority of the people, and, after hearing the case, dismissed the battalion of volunteers to various posts in the surrounding country. Public opinion immediately turned against Buonaparte, convinced as the populace was that he was the author of the entire disturbance. The commander of the garrison was embittered, and sent a report to the war department displaying the young officer's behavior in the most unfavorable light. Buonaparte's defense was contained in a manifesto which made the citizens still more furious by its declaration that the whole civic structure of their town was worthless, and should have been overthrown.

The aged Paoli found his situation more trying with every day. Under a constitutional monarchy, such as he had admired and studied in England, such as he even yet hoped for and expected in France, he had believed his own land might find a virtual autonomy. With riot and disorder in every town, it would not be long before the absolute disqualification of his countrymen for self-government would be proved and the French administration restored. For his present purpose, therefore, the peace must be kept, and Buonaparte, upon whom, whether justly or not, the blame for these recent broils rested, must be removed elsewhere, if possible; but as the troublesome youth was the son of an old friend and the head of a still influential family, it must be done without offense. The government at Paris might be pacified if the absentee officer were restored to his post; with Quenza in command of the volunteers there would be little danger of a second outbreak in Ajaccio.

It was more than easy, therefore, for the discredited revolutionary, on condition that he should leave Corsica, to secure from the authorities the papers necessary to put himself and his actions in the most favorable light. Buonaparte armed himself accordingly with an authenticated certificate as to the posts he had held, and the period during which he had held them, and with another as to his "civism"—the phrase used at that time to designate the quality of friendliness to the Revolution. The former seems to have been framed according to his own statements, and was speciously deceptive. Valence, where the royalist colonel regarded him as a deserter, was of course closed, and in Paris alone could the necessary steps be taken to secure restoration to rank with back pay, or rather the reversal of the whole record as it then stood on the regimental books. For this reason he likewise secured letters of introduction to the leading Corsicans in the French capital, and, borrowing money for the journey, sailed from Bastia on May second, 1792. The outlook might have disheartened a weaker man. Peraldi, the Corsican deputy, was a brother of the defeated rival; Paoli's displeasure was only too manifest; the bitter hate of a large element in Ajaccio was unconcealed. Rejected by Corsica, would France receive him? Would not the few French friends he had be likewise alienated by these last escapades? Could the formal record of regimental offenses be expunged? In any event, how slight the prospect of success in the great mad capital, amid the convulsive throes of a nation's disorders!

But in the last consideration lay his only chance: the nation's disorder was to supply the remedy for Buonaparte's irregularities. The King had refused his sanction to the secularization of the estates which had once been held by the emigrants and recusant ecclesiastics; the Jacobins retorted by open hostility to the monarchy. The plotting of noble and princely refugees with various royal and other schemers two years before had been a crime against the King and the constitutionalists, for it jeopardized their last chance for existence, even their very lives. Within so short a time what had been criminal in the emigrants had seemingly become the only means of self-preservation for their intended victim. His constitutional supporters recognized that, in the adoption of this course by the King, the last hope of a peaceful solution to their awful problem had disappeared. It was now certain and generally known that Louis himself was in negotiation with the foreign sovereigns; to thwart his plans and avert the consequences it was essential that open hostilities against his secret allies should be begun. Consequently, on April twentieth, 1792, war had been declared against Austria by influence of the King's friends. The populace, awed by the armies thus called out, were at first silently defiant, an attitude which changed to open fury when the defeat of the French troops in the Austrian Netherlands was announced.

The moderate republicans, or Girondists, as they were called from the district where they were strongest, were now the mediating party; their leader, Roland, was summoned to form a ministry and appease this popular rage. It was one of his colleagues who had examined the complaint against Buonaparte received from the commander of the garrison at Ajaccio. According to a strict interpretation of the military code there was scarcely a crime which Buonaparte had not committed: desertion, disobedience, tampering, attack on constituted authority, and abuse of official power. The minister reported the conduct of both Quenza and Buonaparte as most reprehensible, and declared that if their offense had been purely military he would have court-martialed them.

Learning first at Marseilles that war had broken out, and that the companies of his regiment were dispersed to various camps for active service, Buonaparte hastened northward. A new passion, which was indicative of the freshly awakened patriotism, had taken possession of the popular fancy. Where the year before the current and universal phrase had been "federation," the talk was now all for the "nation." It might well be so. Before the traveler arrived at his destination further disaster had overtaken the French army, one whole regiment had deserted under arms to the enemy, and individual soldiers were escaping by hundreds. The officers of the Fourth Artillery were resigning and running away in about equal numbers. Consternation ruled supreme, treason and imbecility were everywhere charged against the authorities. War within, war without, and the army in a state of collapse! The emigrant princes would return, and France be sold to a bondage tenfold more galling than that from which she was struggling to free herself.

When Buonaparte reached Paris on May twenty-eighth, 1792, there was a poor outlook for a suppliant, bankrupt in funds and nearly so in reputation; but he was undaunted, and his application for reinstatement in the artillery was made without the loss of a moment. A new minister of war had been appointed but a few days before,—there were six changes in that office during as many months,—and the assistant now in charge of the artillery seemed favorable to the request. For a moment he thought of restoring the suppliant to his position, but events were marching too swiftly, and demands more urgent jostled aside the claims of an obscure lieutenant with a shady character. Buonaparte at once grasped the fact that he could win his cause only by patience or by importunity, and began to consider how he should arrange for a prolonged stay in the capital. His scanty resources were already exhausted, but he found Bourrienne, a former school-fellow at Brienne, in equal straits, waiting like himself for something to turn up. Over their meals in a cheap restaurant on the Rue St. Honoré they discussed various means of gaining a livelihood, and seriously contemplated a partnership in subletting furnished rooms. But Bourrienne very quickly obtained the post of secretary in the embassy at Stuttgart, so that his comrade was left to make his struggle alone by pawning what few articles of value he possessed.

The days and weeks were full of incidents terrible and suggestive in their nature. The Assembly dismissed the King's body-guard on May twenty-ninth; on June thirteenth, the Girondists were removed from the ministry; within a few days it was known at court that Prussia had taken the field as an ally of Austria, and on the seventeenth a conservative, Feuillant cabinet was formed. Three days later the popular insurrection began, on the twenty-sixth the news of the coalition was announced, and on the twenty-eighth Lafayette endeavored to stay the tide of furious discontent which was now rising in the Assembly. But it was as ruthless as that of the ocean, and on July eleventh the country was declared in danger. There was, however, a temporary check to the rush, a moment of repose in which the King, on the fourteenth, celebrated among his people the fall of the Bastille. But an address from the local assembly at Marseilles had arrived, demanding the dethronement of Louis and the abolition of the monarchy. Such was the impatience of that city that, without waiting for the logical effect of their declaration, its inhabitants determined to make a demonstration in Paris. On the thirtieth a deputation five hundred strong arrived before the capital. On August third, they entered the city singing the immortal song which bears their name, but which was written at Strasburg by an officer of engineers, Rouget de Lisle. The southern fire of the newcomers kindled again the flame of Parisian sedition, and the radicals fanned it. At last, on August tenth, the conflagration burst forth in an uprising such as had not yet been seen of all that was outcast and lawless in the great town; with them consorted the discontented and the envious, the giddy and the frivolous, the curious and the fickle, all the unstable elements of society. This time the King was unnerved; in despair he fled for asylum to the chamber of the Assembly. That body, unsympathetic for him, but sensitive to the ragings of the mob without, found the fugitive unworthy of his office. Before night the kingship was abolished, and the royal family were imprisoned in the Temple.

There is no proof that the young Corsican was at this time other than an interested spectator. We hear of him as visiting his sister Elisa at St. Cyr, and in a letter written on June eighteenth he speculates on her fate, and on the chance of her marrying without a dot. In quiet times, the wards of St. Cyr received, on leaving, a dowry of three thousand livres, with three hundred more for an outfit; but as matters then were, the establishment was breaking up and there were no funds for that purpose. Like the rest, the Corsican girl was soon to be stripped of her pretty uniform, the neat silk gown, the black gloves, and the dainty bronze slippers which Mme. de Maintenon had prescribed for the noble damsels at that royal school. In another letter written four days later there is a graphic account of the threatening demonstrations made by the rabble and a vivid description which indicates Napoleon's being present when the mob recoiled at the very door of the Tuileries before the calm and dignified courage of the King. There is even a story, told as of the time, by Bourrienne, a very doubtful authority, but probably invented later, of Buonaparte's openly expressing contempt for riots. "How could the King let the rascals in! He should have shot down a few hundred, and the rest would have run." This statement, like others made by Bourrienne, is to be received with the utmost caution.

In a letter written about the beginning of July, probably to Lucien or possibly to Joseph, and evidently intended to be read in the Jacobin Club of Ajaccio, there are clear indications of its writer's temper. He speaks with judicious calmness of the project for educational reform; of Lafayette's appearance before the Assembly, which had pronounced the country in danger and was now sitting in permanence, as perhaps necessary to prevent its taking an extreme and dangerous course; of the French as no longer deserving the pains men took for them, since they were a people old and without continuity of coherence;[1] of their leaders as poor creatures engaged in low plots; and of the damper which such a spectacle puts on ambition. Clearly the lesson of moderation which he inculcates is for the first time sincerely given. The preacher, according to his own judgment for the time being, is no Frenchman, no demagogue, nothing but a simple Corsican anxious to live far from the madness of mobs and the emptiness of so-called glory.

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[1] The rare and curious pamphlet entitled "Manuscrit de l'Île d'Elbe," attributed to Montholon and probably published by Edward O'Meara, contains headings for ten chapters which were dictated by Napoleon at Elba on February twenty-second, 1815. The argument is: The Bourbons ascended the throne, in the person of Henry IV., by conquering the so-called Holy League against the Protestants, and by the consent of the people; a third dynasty thus followed the second; then came the republic, and its succession was legitimated by victory, by the will of the people, and by the recognition of all the powers of Europe. The republic made a new France by emancipating the Gauls from the rule of the Franks. The people had raised their leader to the imperial throne in order to consolidate their new interests: this was the fourth dynasty, etc., etc. The contemplated book was to work out in detail this very conception of a nation as passing through successive phases: at the close of each it is worn out, but a new rule regenerates it, throwing off the incrustations and giving room to the life within. It is interesting to note the genesis of Napoleon's ideas and the pertinacity with which he held them.

It has been asserted that on the dreadful day of August tenth Buonaparte's assumed philosophy was laid aside, and that he was a mob leader at the barricades. His own account of the matter does not bear this out. "I felt," said he, "as if I should have defended the King if called to do so. I was opposed to those who would found the republic by means of the populace. Besides, I saw civilians attacking men in uniforms; that gave me a shock." He said further in his reminiscences that he viewed the entire scene from the windows of a furniture shop kept by Fauvelet, an old school friend. The impression left after reading his narrative of the frightful carnage before the Tuileries, of the indecencies committed by frenzied women at the close of the fight, of the mad excitement in the neighboring cafés, and of his own calmness throughout, is that he was in no way connected either with the actors or their deeds, except to shout "Hurrah for the nation!" when summoned to do so by a gang of ruffians who were parading the streets under the banner of a gory head elevated on a pike. The truth of his statements cannot be established by any collateral evidence.

It is not likely that an ardent radical leader like Buonaparte, well known and influential in the Rhone valley, had remained a stranger to the Marseilles deputation. If the Duchesse d'Abrantès be worthy of any credence, he was very influential, and displayed great activity with the authorities during the seventh and eighth, running hither, thither, everywhere, to secure redress for an illegal domiciliary visit which her mother, Mme. Permon, had received on the seventh. But her testimony is of very little value, such is her anxiety to establish an early intimacy with the great man of her time. Joseph, in his memoirs, declares that his brother was present at the conflict of August tenth, and that Napoleon wrote him at the time, "If Louis XVI. had appeared on horseback, he would have conquered." "After the victory of the Marseillais," continues the passage quoted from the letter, "I saw a man about to kill a soldier of the guard. I said to him, 'Southron, let us spare the unfortunate!' 'Art thou from the South?' 'Yes.' 'Well, then, we will spare him.'" Moreover, it is a fact that Santerre, the notorious leader of the mob on that day, was three years later, on the thirteenth of Vendémiaire, most useful to Buonaparte; that though degraded from the office of general to which he was appointed in the revolutionary army, he was in 1800 restored to his rank by the First Consul. All this is consistent with Napoleon's assertion, but it proves nothing conclusively; and there is certainly ground for suspicion when we reflect that these events were ultimately decisive of Buonaparte's fortunes.

The Feuillant ministry fell with the King, and an executive council composed of radicals took its place. For one single day Paris reeled like a drunkard, but on the next the shops were open again. On the following Sunday the opera was packed at a benefit performance for the widows and orphans of those who had fallen in victory. A few days later Lafayette, as commander of the armies in the North, issued a pronunciamento against the popular excesses. He even arrested the commissioners of the Assembly who were sent to supplant him and take the ultimate direction of the campaign. But he quickly found that his old prestige was gone; he had not kept pace with the mad rush of popular opinion; neither in person nor as the sometime commander of the National Guard had he any longer the slightest influence. Impeached and declared an outlaw, he lost his balance like the King, and fled for refuge into the possessions of Liège. The Austrians violated the sanctuary of neutral territory, and captured him, exactly as Napoleon at a later day violated the neutrality of Baden in the case of the Duc d'Enghien. On August twenty-third the strong place of Longwy was delivered into the hands of the Prussians, the capitulation being due, as was claimed, to treachery among the French officers.

CHAPTER XIII

BONAPARTE THE FRENCH JACOBIN

REINSTATEMENT AND PROMOTION—FURTHER SOLICITATION—NAPOLEON AND ELISA—OCCUPATIONS IN PARIS—RETURN TO AJACCIO—DISORDERS IN CORSICA—BONAPARTE A FRENCH JACOBIN—EXPEDITION AGAINST SARDINIA—COURSE OF FRENCH AFFAIRS—PAOLI'S CHANGED ATTITUDE—ESTRANGEMENT OF BONAPARTE AND PAOLI—MISCHANCES IN THE PREPARATIONS AGAINST SARDINIA—FAILURE OF THE FRENCH DETACHMENT—BONAPARTE AND THE FIASCO OF THE CORSICAN DETACHMENT—FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN FRANCE—ENGLAND'S POLICY—PAOLI IN DANGER—DENOUNCED AND SUMMONED TO PARIS.

THE committee to which Buonaparte's request for reinstatement was referred made a report on June twenty-first, 1792, exonerating him from blame. The reasons given were evidently based on the representations of the suppliant himself, first that Duteil, the inspector, had given him permission to sail for Corsica in time to avoid the equinox, a distorted truth, and second that the Corsican authorities had certified to his civism, his good conduct, and his constant presence at home during his irregular absence from the army, a truthful statement, but incomplete, since no mention was made of the disgraceful Easter riots at Ajaccio and of Buonaparte's share in them. On July tenth the Minister of War adopted the committee's report, and this fact was announced in a letter addressed by him to Captain Buonaparte!

A formal report in his favor was drawn up on August twentieth. On the thirtieth he was completely reinstated, or rather his record was entirely sponged out and consigned, as was hoped, to oblivion; for his captain's commission was dated back to February sixth, 1792, the day on which his promotion would have occurred in due course if he had been present in full standing with his regiment. His arrears for that rank were to be paid in full.

Such success was intoxicating. Monge, the great mathematician, had been his master at the military school in Paris, and was now minister of the navy. True to his nature, with the carelessness of an adventurer and the effrontery of a gambler, the newly fledged captain promptly put in an application for a position as lieutenant-colonel of artillery in the sea service. The authorities must have thought the petition a joke, for the paper was pigeonholed, and has been found marked S. R., that is, *sans réponse*—without reply. Probably it was written in earnest, the motive being possibly an invincible distaste for the regiment in which he had been disgraced, which was still in command of a colonel who was not disposed to leniency.

An easy excuse for shirking duty and returning to the old habits of a Corsican agitator was at hand. The events of August tenth settled the fate of all monarchical institutions, even those which were partly charitable. Among other royal foundations suppressed by the Assembly on August eighteenth was that of St. Cyr, formally styled the Establishment of St. Louis. The date fixed for closing was just subsequent to Buonaparte's promotion, and the pupils were then to be dismissed. Each beneficiary was to receive a mileage of one livre for every league she had to traverse. Three hundred and fifty-two was the sum due to Elisa. Some one must escort an unprotected girl on the long journey; no one was so suitable as her elder brother and natural protector. Accordingly, on September first, the brother and sister appeared before the proper authorities to apply for the traveling allowance of the latter. Whatever other accomplishments Mlle. de Buonaparte had learned at the school of St. Louis, she was still as deficient in writing and spelling as her brother. The formal requisitions written by both are still extant; they would infuriate any conscientious teacher in a primary school. But they sufficed; the money was paid on the next day, and that night the brother and sister lodged in the Holland Patriots' Hotel in Paris, where they appear to have remained for a week.

This is the statement of an early biographer, and appears to be borne out by an autograph letter of Napoleon's, recently found, in which he says he left Paris on a date which, although the figure is blurred, seems to be the ninth. Some days would be necessary for the new captain to procure a further leave of absence. Judging from subsequent events, it is possible that he was also seeking further acquaintance and favor with the influential Jacobins of Paris. During the days from the second to the seventh more than a thousand of the royalists confined in the prisons of Paris were massacred. It seems incredible that a man of Napoleon's temperament should have seen and known nothing of the riotous events connected with such bloodshed. Yet nowhere does he hint that he had any personal knowledge. It is possible that he left earlier than is generally supposed, but it is not likely in view of the known dates of his journey. In any case he did not seriously compromise himself, doing at the most nothing further than to make plans for the future. It may have become clear to him, for it was true and he behaved accordingly, that France was not yet ready for him, nor he for France.

It is, moreover, a strong indication of Buonaparte's interest in the French Revolution being purely tentative that as soon as the desired leave was granted, probably in the second week of September, without waiting for the all-important fifteen hundred livres of arrears, now due him, but not paid until a month later, he and his sister set out for home. They traveled by diligence to Lyons, and thence by the Rhone to Marseilles. During the few hours' halt of the boat at Valence, Napoleon's friends, among them some of his creditors, who apparently bore him no grudge, waited on him with kindly manifestations of interest. His former landlady, Mme. Bou, although her bill had been but insignificantly diminished by payments on account, brought as her gift a basket of the fruit in which the neighborhood abounds at that season. The regiment was no longer there, the greater portion, with the colonel, being now on the northeastern frontier under Dumouriez, facing the victorious legions of Prussia and Austria. On the fourteenth the travelers were at Marseilles, next day they sailed for Corsica, and on the seventeenth Buonaparte was once more in his home, no longer so confident, perhaps, of a career among his own people, but determined to make another effort. It was his fourth return. Lucien and Fesch were leaders in the radical club; Joseph was at his post; Louis, as usual, was disengaged and idle; Mme. Buonaparte and the younger children were well; he himself was of course triumphantly vindicated by his promotion. The ready money from the fortune of the old archdeacon was long since exhausted, to be sure; but the excellent vineyards, mulberry plantations, and gardens of the family properties were still productive, and Napoleon's private purse would soon be replenished by the quartermaster of his regiment.

The course of affairs in France had materially changed the aspect of Corsican politics; the situation was, if anything, more favorable for a revolutionary venture than ever before. Salicetti had come back to Corsica after the adjournment of the Constituent Assembly with many new ideas which he had gathered from observing the conduct of the Paris commune, and these he unsparingly disseminated among his sympathizers. They proved to be apt scholars, and quickly caught the tricks of demagogism, bribery, corruption, and malversation of the public funds. He had returned to France before Buonaparte arrived, as a member of the newly elected legislature, but his evil influence survived his departure, and his lieutenants were ubiquitous and active. Paoli had been rendered helpless, and was sunk in despair. He was now commander-in-chief of the regular troops in garrison, but it was a position to which he had been appointed against his will, for it weakened his influence with his own party. Pozzo di Borgo, his stanch supporter and Buonaparte's enemy, was attorney-general in Salicetti's stead. As Paoli was at the same time general of the volunteer guard, the entire power of the islands, military and civil, was in his hands: but the responsibility for good order was likewise his, and the people were, if anything, more unruly than ever; for it was to their minds illogical that their idol should exercise such supreme power, not as a Corsican, but in the name of France. The composition of the two chief parties had therefore changed materially, and although their respective views were modified to a certain extent, they were more embittered than ever against each other.

Buonaparte could not be neutral; his nature and his surroundings forbade it. His first step was to resume his command in the volunteers, and, under pretext of inspecting their posts, to make a journey through the island; his second was to go through the form of seeking a reconciliation with Paoli. In the clubs, among his friends and subordinates at the various military stations, his talk was loud and imperious, his manner haughty and assuming. A letter written by him at the time to Costa, one of the militia lieutenants and a thorough Corsican, explains that the writer is detained from going to Bonifacio by an order from the general (Paoli) to come to Corte; he will, however, hasten to his post at the head of the volunteers on the very next day, and there will be an end to all disorder and irregularity. "Greet our friends, and assure them of my desire to further their interests." The epistle was written in Italian, but that fact signifies little in comparison with the new tone used in speaking about France: "The enemy has abandoned Verdun and Longwy, and recrossed the river to return home, but our people are not asleep." Lucien added a postscript explaining that he had sent a pamphlet to his dear Costa, as to a friend, not as to a co-worker, for that he had been unwilling to be. Both the brothers seem already to have considered the possibility of abandoning Corsica.

No sooner had war been declared against Austria in April, than it became evident that the powers whose territories bordered on those of France had previously reached an agreement, and were about to form a coalition in order to make the war general. The Austrian Netherlands, what we now know as Belgium, were already saturated with the revolutionary spirit. It was not probable that much annoyance would come from that quarter. Spain, Prussia, and Holland would, however, surely join the alliance; and if the Italian principalities, with the kingdom of Sardinia, should take the same course, France would be in dire straits. It was therefore suggested in the Assembly that a blow should be struck at the house of Savoy, in order to awe both that and the other courts of Italy into inactivity. The idea of an attack on Sardinia for this purpose originated in Corsica, but among the friends of Salicetti, and it was he who urged the scheme successfully. In order to secure Paoli's influence not only in his own island, but in Sardinia, where he was likewise well known and admired, the ministers forced upon him the unwelcome appointment of lieutenant-general in the regular army, and his friend Peraldi was sent to prepare a fleet at Toulon.

The events of August tenth put an end for the time being to constitutional government in France. The commissioners of the Paris sections supplanted the municipal council, and Danton, climbing to power as the representative "plain man," became momentarily the presiding genius of the new Jacobin commune, which was soon able to usurp the supreme control of France. A call was issued for the election by manhood suffrage of a National Convention, and a committee of surveillance was appointed with the bloodthirsty Marat as its motive power. At the instigation of this committee large numbers of royalists, constitutionalists, and others suspected of holding kindred doctrines, were thrown into prison. The Assembly went through the form of confirming the new despotism, including both the commune of the sections and a Jacobin ministry in which Danton held the portfolio of justice. It then dispersed. On September second began that general clearance of the jails under mock forms of justice to which reference has been made. It was really a massacre, and lasted, as has been said, for five days. Versailles, Lyons, Meaux, Rheims, and Orléans were similarly "purified." Amid these scenes the immaculate Robespierre, whose hands were not soiled with the blood spilled on August tenth, appeared as the calm statesman controlling the wild vagaries of the rough and impulsive but unselfish and uncalculating Danton. These two, with Philip Égalité and Collet d'Herbois, were among those elected to represent Paris in the Convention. That body met on September twenty-first. As they sat in the amphitheater of the Assembly, the Girondists, or moderate republicans, who were in a strong majority, were on the right of the president's chair. High up on the extreme left were the Jacobins, or "Mountain"; between were placed those timid trimmers who were called the "Plain" and the "Marsh" according to the degree of their democratic sentiments. The members were, of course, without exception republicans. The first act of the Convention was to abolish the monarchy, and to declare France a republic. The next was to establish an executive council. It was decreed that September twenty-second, 1792, was the "first day of the year I of the republic." Under the leadership of Brissot and Roland the Girondists asserted their power as the majority, endeavoring to restore order in Paris, and to bridle the extreme Jacobins. But notwithstanding its right views and its numbers, the Girondist party displayed no sagacity; before the year I was three months old, the unscrupulous Jacobins, with the aid of the Paris commune, had reasserted their supremacy.

The declaration of the republic only hastened the execution of Salicetti's plan regarding Sardinia, and the Convention was more energetic than the Assembly had been. The fleet was made ready, troops from France were to be embarked at Villefranche, and a force composed in part of regulars, in part of militia, was to be equipped in Corsica and to sail thence to join the main expedition. Buonaparte's old battalion was among those that were selected from the Corsican volunteers. From the outset Paoli had been unfriendly to the scheme; its supporters, whose zeal far outran their means, were not his friends. Nevertheless, he was in supreme command of both regulars and volunteers, and the government having authorized the expedition, the necessary orders had to be issued through him as the only channel of authority. Buonaparte's reappearance among his men had been of course irregular. Being now a captain of artillery in the Fourth Regiment, on active service and in the receipt of full pay, he could no longer legally be a lieutenant-colonel of volunteers, a position which had also been made one of emolument. But he was not a man to stand on slight formalities, and had evidently determined to seize both horns of the dilemma.

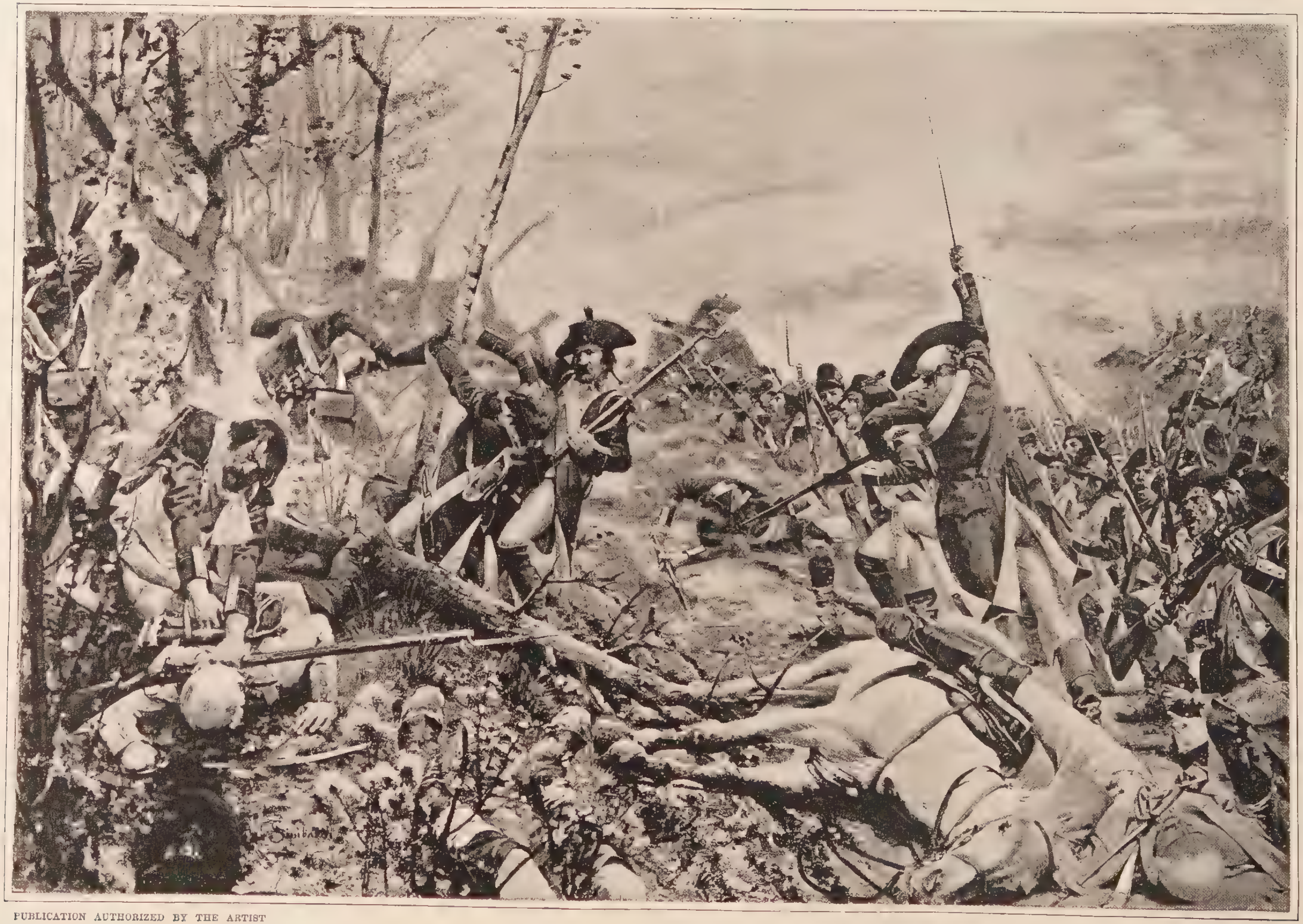
Paoli, as a French official, of course could not listen for an instant to such a preposterous notion. But as a patriot anxious to keep all the influence he could, and as a family friend of the Buonapartes, he was unwilling to order the young captain back to his post in France, as he might well have done. The interview between the two men at Corte was, therefore, indecisive. The older was benignant but firm in refusing his formal consent; the younger pretended to be indignant that he could not secure his rights: it is said that he even threatened to denounce in Paris the anti-nationalist attitude of his former hero. So it happened that Buonaparte returned to Ajaccio with a permissive authorization, and, welcomed by his men, assumed a command to which he could have no claim, while Paoli shut his eyes to an act of flagrant insubordination. Paoli saw that Buonaparte was irrevocably committed to revolutionary France; Buonaparte was convinced, or pretended to be, that Paoli was again leaning toward an English protectorate. French imperialist writers hint without the slightest basis of proof that both Paoli and Pozzo di Borgo were in the pay of England. Many have believed, in the same gratuitous manner, that there was a plot among members of the French party to give Buonaparte the chance, by means of the Sardinian expedition, to seize the chief command at least of the Corsican troops, and thus eventually to supplant Paoli. If this conjecture be true, Paoli either knew nothing of the conspiracy, or behaved as he did because his own plans were not yet ripe. The drama of his own personal perplexities, cross-purposes, and ever false positions was rapidly moving to an end; the logic of events was too strong for the upright but perplexed old patriot, and a scene or two would soon complete the final act of his public career.

The plan for invading Sardinia was over-complex and too nicely adjusted. One portion of the fleet was to skirt the Italian shores, make demonstrations in the various harbors, and demand in one of them — that of Naples — public reparation for an insult already offered to the new French flag, which displayed the three colors of liberty. The other portion was first to embark the Corsican guards and French troops at Ajaccio, then to unite with the former in the Bay of Palma, whence both were to proceed against Cagliari. But the French soldiers to be taken from the Army of the Var under General Anselme were in fact non-existent; the only military force to be found was a portion of the Marseilles national guard — mere boys, unequipped, untrained, and inexperienced. Winds and waves, too, were adverse: two of the vessels were wrecked, and one was disabled. The rest were badly demoralized, and their crews became unruly. On the arrival of the ships at Ajaccio, a party of roistering sailors went ashore, affiliated immediately with the French soldiers of the garrison, and in the rough horse-play of such occasions picked a quarrel with certain of the Corsican militia, killing two of their number. The character of the islanders showed itself at once in further violence and the fiercest threats. The tumult was finally allayed, but it was perfectly clear that for Corsicans and Marseillais to be embarked on the same vessel was to invite mutiny, riot, and bloodshed.

Buonaparte thought he saw his way to an independent command, and at once proposed what was manifestly the only alternative—a separate Corsican expedition. The French fleet accordingly embarked the garrison troops, and proceeded on its way; the Corsicans remained ashore, and Buonaparte with them. Scenes like that at Ajaccio were repeated in the harbor of St. Florent, and the attack on Cagliari by the French failed, partly, as might be supposed, from the poor equipment of the fleet and the wretched quality of the men, partly because the two flotillas, or what was left of them, failed to effect a junction at the appointed place and time. When they did unite, it was February fourteenth, 1793; the men were ill fed and mutinous; the troops that landed to storm the place fell into a panic, and would actually have surrendered if the officers had not quickly reëmbarked them. The costly enterprise met with but a single success: Naples was cowed, and the court promised neutrality, with reparation for the insult to the tricolor.

The Corsican expedition was quite as ill-starred as the French. Paoli accepted Buonaparte's plan, but appointed his nephew, Colonna-Cesari, to lead, with instructions to see that, if possible, "this unfortunate expedition shall end in smoke." The disappointed but stubborn young aspirant remained in his subordinate place as an officer of the second battalion of the Corsican national guard. It was a month before the volunteers could be equipped and a French corvette with her attendant feluccas could be made ready to sail. On February twentieth, 1793, the vessels were finally armed, manned, and provisioned. The destination of the flotilla was the Magdalena Islands, one of which is Caprera, since renowned as the home of Garibaldi. The troops embarked and put to sea. Almost at once the wind fell; there was a two days' calm, and the ships reached their destination with diminished supplies and dispirited crews. The first attack, made on St. Stephen, was successful. Buonaparte and his guns were then landed on that spot to bombard, across a narrow strait, Magdalena, the chief town on the main island. The enemy's fire was soon silenced, and nothing remained but for the corvette to work slowly round the intervening island of Caprera, and take possession. The vessel had suffered slightly from the enemy's fire, two of her crew having been killed. On the pretense that a mutiny was imminent, Colonna-Cesari declared that coöperation between the sloop and the shore batteries was no longer possible; the artillery and their commander were reëmbarked only with the utmost difficulty; the unlucky expedition returned on February twenty-seventh to Bonifacio. Both Buonaparte and Quenza were enraged with Paoli's nephew, declaring him to have acted traitorously. It is significant of the utter anarchy then prevailing that nobody was punished for the disgraceful fiasco. Buonaparte, on landing, at once bade farewell to his volunteers. When he entered Ajaccio, on March third, he found that he was no longer, even by assumption, a lieutenant-colonel; for during his short absence the whole Corsican guard had been disbanded to make way for two battalions of light infantry whose officers were to be appointed by the directory of the island.

Strange news now greeted his ears. Much of what had occurred since his departure from Paris he already knew. France having destroyed root and branch the tyranny of feudal privileges, the whole social edifice was slack in every joint, and there was no strong hand to



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THE BATTLE OF JEMMAPES, NEAR MONS, BELGIUM, NOVEMBER 6, 1792

FROM THE PAINTING BY SINIBALDI

The crowning incident of the battle was the taking of a redoubt by Dampierre, who led parts of broken battalions that charged singing the "Marseillaise"

tighten the bolts; for the King, in dallying with foreign courts, had virtually deserted his people. The monarchy had therefore fallen, but not until its friends had resorted to the expedient of a foreign war as a prop to its fortunes. The early victories won by Austria and Prussia had stung the nation to madness. Robespierre and Danton having become dictators, all moderate policy was eclipsed. The executive council of the Convention, determined to appease the nation, gathered their strength in one vigorous effort, and put three great armies in the field. On November sixth, 1792, to the amazement of the world, Dumouriez won the battle of Jemmapes, thus conquering the Austrian Netherlands as far north as Liège. The Scheldt, which had been closed since 1648 through the influence of England and Holland, was reopened, trade resumed its natural channel, and, in the exuberance of popular joy, measures were taken for the immediate establishment of a Belgian republic. The other two armies, under Custine and Kellermann, were less successful. The former, having occupied Frankfort, was driven back to the Rhine; the latter defeated the Allies at Valmy, but failed in the task of coming to Custine's support at the proper moment for combined action. Meantime the agitation in Paris had taken the form of personal animosity to "Louis Capet," as the leaders of the disordered populace called the King. In November he was summoned to the bar of the Convention and questioned. When it came to the consideration of an actual trial, the Girondists, willing to save the prisoner's life, claimed that the Convention had no jurisdiction, and must appeal to the sovereign people for authorization. The Jacobins insisted on the sovereign power of the Convention, Robespierre protesting in the name of the people against an appeal to the people. Supported by the noisy outcries not only of the Parisian populace, but of their followers elsewhere, the radicals prevailed. By a vote of three hundred and sixty-six to three hundred and fifty-five the verdict of death was pronounced on January seventeenth, 1793, and four days later the sentence was executed. This act was a defiance to all monarchs, or, in other words, to all Europe.

The younger Pitt was at this juncture prime minister of England. Like the majority of his countrymen, he had mildly approved the course of the French Revolution down to 1789; with them in the same way his opinions had since that time undergone a change. By the aid of Burke's biased but masterful eloquence the English people were gradually convinced that Jacobinism, violence, and crime were the essence of the movement, constitutional reform but a specious pretext. Between 1789 and 1792 there was a rising tide of adverse public sentiment so swift and strong that Pitt was unable to follow it. By the execution of Louis the English moderates were silenced; the news was received with a cry of horror, and the nation demanded war. Were kings' heads to fall, and republican ideas, supported by republican armies, to spread like a conflagration? The still monarchical liberals of England could give no answer to the case of Louis or to the instance of Belgium, and were stunned. The English anti-Jacobins became as fanatical as the French Jacobins. Pitt could not resist the torrent. Yet in his extreme necessity he saw his chance for a double stroke: to throw the blame for the war on France, and to consolidate once more his nearly vanished power in Parliament. With masterly adroitness France was tempted into a declaration of war against England. Enthusiasm raged in Paris like fire among dry stubble. France, if so it must be, against the world! Liberty and equality her religion! The land a camp! The entire people an army! Three hundred thousand men to be selected, equipped, and drilled at once!

Nothing indicates that Buonaparte was in any way moved by the terrible massacres of September, or even by the news of Louis's unmerited fate. But the declaration of war was a novelty which must have deeply interested him; for what was Paoli now to do? From gratitude to England he had repeatedly and earnestly declared that he could never take up arms against her. He was already a lieutenant-general in the service of her enemy, his division was assigned to the feeble and disorganized Army of Italy, which was nominally being equipped for active service, and the leadership, so ran the news received at Ajaccio, had been conferred on the Corsican director. The fact was that the radicals of the Convention had long been aware of the old patriot's devotion to constitutional monarchy, and now saw their way to be rid of so dangerous a foe. Three successive commanders of that army had already found disgrace in their attempts with inadequate means to dislodge the Sardinian troops from the mountain passes of the Maritime Alps. Mindful, therefore, of their fate, and of his obligations to England, Paoli firmly refused the proffered honor. Suspicion as to the existence of an English party in the island had early been awakened among the members of the Mountain; for half the Corsican delegation to the Convention had opposed the sentence passed on the King. When the ill-starred Sardinian expedition reached Toulon, the blame of failure was laid by the Jacobins on Paoli's shoulders.

Salicetti, who was now a real power among the leaders at Paris, felt that he must hasten to his department in order to forestall events, if possible, and keep together the remnants of sympathy with France; he was appointed one of a commission to enforce in the island the decrees of the Convention. The commission was well received and the feeling against France was being rapidly allayed when, most unexpectedly, fatal news arrived from Paris. In the preceding November Lucien Buonaparte had made the acquaintance in Ajaccio of Huguet de Sémonville, who was on his way to Constantinople as a special envoy of the provisory council then in charge of the Paris administration. The ambassador was recalled to the mainland on February second, 1793, and took his new-found friend with him as secretary or useful man. Both were firm Jacobins, and the master having failed in making any impression on Paoli during his Corsican sojourn, the man took revenge by denouncing the lieutenant-general as a traitor before a political meeting in Toulon. An address calumniating the Corsican leader in the most excited terms was sent to the deputy of the department in Paris. The news of the defection of Dumouriez had just arrived, public opinion was inflamed, and on April second Paoli, who seemed likely to be a second Dumouriez, was summoned to appear before the Convention. For a moment he became again the most popular man in Corsica. He had always retained many warm personal friends even among the radicals; the royalists were now forever alienated from a government which had killed their king; the church could no longer expect protection when impious men were in power. These three elements united immediately with the Paolists to protest against the arbitrary act of the Convention. Even in that land of confusion there was a degree of chaos hitherto unequaled.

CHAPTER XIV

A JACOBIN HEJIRA

THE WANING OF BONAPARTE'S PATRIOTISM—ALLIANCE WITH SALICETTI—ANOTHER SCHEME FOR LEADERSHIP—FAILURE TO SEIZE THE CITADEL OF AJACCIO—SECOND PLAN—PAOLI'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CONVENTION—BONAPARTE FINALLY DISCREDITED IN CORSICA—PAOLI TURNS TO ENGLAND—PLANS OF THE BONAPARTE FAMILY—THEIR ARRIVAL IN TOULON—NAPOLEON'S CHARACTER—HIS CORSICAN CAREER—LESSONS OF HIS FAILURES—HIS ABILITY, SITUATION, AND EXPERIENCE.

CHAP. XIV
1793

BUONAPARTE was for an instant among the most zealous of Paoli's supporters, and, taking up his ever-ready pen, he wrote two impassioned papers whose respective tenors it is not easy to reconcile: one an appeal to the Convention in Paoli's behalf, the other a demand addressed to the municipality of Ajaccio that the people should renew their oath of allegiance to France. The captain's French regiment had already been some five months in active service. If his passion had been only for military glory, that was to be found nowhere so certainly as in its ranks, where he should have been. But his passion for political renown was clearly far stronger. Where could it be so easily gratified as in Corsica under the present conditions? The personality of the young adventurer had for a long time been curiously double: but while he had successfully retained the position of a French officer in France, his identity as a Corsican patriot had been nearly obliterated in Corsica by his constant quarrels and repeated failures. Having become a French radical, he had been forced into a certain antagonism to Paoli and had thereby jeopardized both his fortunes and his career as far as they were dependent on Corsican support. But with Paoli under the ban of the Convention, and suspected of connivance with English schemes, there might be a revulsion of feeling and a chance to make French influence paramount once more in the island under the leadership of the Buonapartes and their friends. For the moment Napoleon preserved the outward semblance of the Corsican patriot, but he seems to have been weary at heart of the thankless rôle and entirely ready to exchange it for another. Whatever may have been his plan or the principles of his conduct, it appears as if the decisive step now to be taken had no relation to either plan or principles, but that it was forced upon him by a chance development of events which he could not have foreseen, and which he was utterly unable to control.

It is unknown whether Salicetti or he made the first advances in coming to an understanding for mutual support, or when that understanding was reached, but it existed as early as January, 1793, a fact conclusively shown by a letter of the former dated early in that month. It was April fifth when Salicetti reached Corsica; the news of Paoli's denunciation by the Convention arrived, as has been said, on the seventeenth. Seeing how nicely adjusted the scales of local politics were, the deputy was eager to secure favor from Paris, and wrote on the sixteenth an account of how warmly his commission had been received. Next day the blow of Paoli's condemnation fell, and it became plain that compromise was no longer possible. When even the Buonapartes were supporting Paoli, the reconciliation of the island with France was clearly impracticable. Salicetti did not hesitate, but as between Paoli and Corsica with no career on the one side, and the possibilities of a great career under France on the other, quickly chose the latter. The same considerations weighed with Buonaparte, he followed his patron, and as a reward was appointed by the French commission inspector-general of artillery for Corsica.

Salicetti had granted what Paoli would not: Buonaparte was free to strike his blow for Corsican leadership. With swift and decisive measures the last scene in his Corsican adventures was arranged. Several great guns which had been saved from a war-ship wrecked in the harbor were lying on the shore unmounted. The inspector-general hypocritically declared that they were a temptation to insurgents and a menace to the public peace; they should be stored in the citadel. His plan was to seize the moment when the heavy pieces were passing the drawbridge, and at the head of his followers to take possession of the stronghold he had so long coveted, and so often failed to capture. If he could hold it for the Convention, a career in Corsica would be at last assured.

But again he was doomed to disappointment. The former garrison had been composed of French soldiers. On the failure of the Sardinian expedition most of these had been landed at Toulon, where they still were. The present one was largely made up of islanders, although some French infantry and the French gunners were still there; the new commander was a Paolist who refused to be hoodwinked, and would not act without an authorization from his general-in-chief. The value of the seizure depended on its promptness. In order to secure a sufficient number of faithful followers Buonaparte started on foot for Bastia to consult the commission. Learning that he was already a suspect at Corte and in danger of arrest, he turned on his steps only to be confronted at Bocognano by a band of Peraldi's followers. Two shepherds from his own estate found a place of concealment for him in a house belonging to their friends, and he passed a day in hiding, escaping after nightfall to Ucciani, whence he returned to Ajaccio in safety. Thwarted in one notion, Buonaparte then proposed to the followers he already had two alternatives: to erect a barricade behind which the guns could be mounted and trained on the citadel, or, easier still, to carry one of the pieces to some spot before the main entrance and then batter in the gate. Neither scheme was considered feasible, and it was determined to secure by bribes, if possible, the coöperation of a portion of the garrison. The attempt failed through the integrity of a single man, and is interesting only as having been Napoleon's first lesson in an art which was thenceforward an unfailing resource. Rumors of these proceedings soon reached Paoli, and Buonaparte was summoned to report immediately at Corte. Such was the intensity of popular bitterness against him in Ajaccio for his desertion of Paoli that he was compelled, after seeking in vain a safe refuge, to flee in disguise to Bastia, which he reached on May tenth, 1793.

A desire for revenge on his Corsican persecutors would now give an additional stimulus to Buonaparte, and still another device to secure the passionately desired citadel of Ajaccio was proposed by him to the commissioners of the Convention, and adopted by them. The remnants of a Swiss regiment stationed near by were to be marched into the city, as if for embarkment; several French war vessels from the harbor of St. Florent, including one frigate, with troops, munitions, and artillery on board, were to appear unexpectedly before the city, land their men and guns, and then, with the help of the Switzers and such of the citizens as espoused the French cause, were to overawe the town and seize the citadel. Corsican affairs had now reached a crisis, for this was a virtual declaration of war. Paoli so understood it, and measures of mutual defiance were at once taken by both sides. The French commissioners formally deposed the officials who sympathized with Paoli; they, in turn, took steps to increase the garrison of Ajaccio, and to strengthen the popular sentiment in their favor.

On receipt of the news that he had been summoned to Paris and the hostile commissioners sent to take his place, Paoli immediately forwarded, by the hands of two friendly representatives, a temperate letter offering to resign and leave Corsica. His messengers were seized and temporarily detained, but in the end they reached Paris, and were kindly received. On May twenty-ninth they appeared on the floor of the Convention, and won their cause. On June fifth the former decree was revoked, and two days later a new and friendly commission of two members started for Corsica. But at Aix they fell into the hands of a royalist mob, and were arrested. Ignorant of these favorable events, and the untoward circumstances by which their effect was thwarted, the disheartened statesman had written and forwarded on May fourteenth a second letter, of the same tenor as the first. This measure likewise had failed of effect, for the messenger had been stopped at Bastia, now the focus of Salicetti's influence, and the letter had never reached its destination.

It was probably in this interval that Paoli finally adopted, as a last desperate resort, the hitherto hazy idea of putting the island under English protection, in order to maintain himself in the mission to which he felt that Providence had called him. The actual departure of Napoleon's expedition from St. Florent gave the final impulse. That event so inflamed the passions of the conservative party in Ajaccio that the whole Buonaparte family was compelled to fly from their home for safety, leaving their small estates to be ravaged and their slender resources to be destroyed, while their partizans were proscribed or imprisoned. They finally found a temporary asylum with a relative in Calvi. The attacking flotilla had been detained nearly a week by a storm, and reached Ajaccio on May twenty-ninth, in the very height of these turmoils. It was too late for any possibility of success. The few French troops on shore were cowed, and dared not show themselves when a party landed from the ships. On the contrary, Napoleon and his volunteers were received with a fire of musketry, and, after spending two anxious days in an outlying tower which they had seized and held, were glad to reëmbark and sail away. Their leader rejoined his family at Calvi. The Jacobin commission held a meeting, and determined to send Salicetti to justify their course at Paris. He carried with him a wordy paper written by Buonaparte in his worst style and spelling, setting forth the military and political situation in Corsica, and containing a bitter tirade against Paoli, which remains to lend some color to the charge that the writer had been, since his leader's return from exile, a spy and an informer, influenced by no high principle of patriotism, but only by a base ambition to supplant the aged president, and then to adopt whichever plan would best further his own interest: ready either to establish a virtual autonomy in his fatherland, or to deliver it entirely into the hands of France.

In this painful document Buonaparte sets forth in fiery phrase the early enthusiasm of republicans for the return of Paoli, and their disillusionment when he surrounded himself with venal men like Pozzo di Borgo, with relatives like his nephew Leonetti, with his vile creatures in general. The misfortunes of the Sardinian expedition, the disgraceful disorders of the island, the failure of the commissioners to secure Ajaccio, are all alike attributed to Paoli. "Can perfidy like this invade the human heart? . . . What fatal ambition overmasters a graybeard of sixty-eight? . . . On his face are goodness and gentleness, in his heart hate and vengeance; he has an oily sensibility in his eyes, and gall in his soul, but neither character nor strength." These were the sentiments proper to a radical of the times, and they found acceptance among the leaders of that class in Paris. More moderate men did what they could to avert the impending breach, but in vain. Corsica was far, communication slow, and the misunderstanding which occurred was consequently unavoidable. It was not until July first that Paoli received news of the pacificatory decrees passed by the Convention more than a month before, and then it was too late; groping in the dark, and unable to get news, he had formed his judgment from what was going on in Corsica, and had therefore committed himself to a change of policy. To him, as to most thinking men, the entire structure of France, social, financial, and political, seemed rotten. Civil war had broken out in Vendée; in Brittany the wildest excesses passed unpunished; the great cities of Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons were in a state of anarchy; the revolutionary tribunal had been established in Paris; the Committee of Public Safety had usurped the supreme power; the France to which he had intrusted the fortunes of Corsica was no more. Already an agent was in communication with the English diplomats in Italy. On July tenth Salicetti arrived in Paris; on the seventeenth Paoli was declared a traitor and an outlaw, and his friends were indicted for trial. But the English fleet was already in the Mediterranean, and although the British protectorate over Corsica was not established until the following year, in the interval the French and their few remaining sympathizers on the island were able at best to hold only the three towns of Bastia, St. Florent, and Calvi.

After the last fiasco before the citadel of Ajaccio, the situation of the Buonapartes was momentarily desperate. Lucien says in his memoirs that shortly before his brother had spoken longingly of India, of the English empire as destined to spread with every year, and of the career which its expansion opened to good officers of artillery, who were scarce among the British—scarce enough everywhere, he thought. "If I ever choose that career," said he, "I hope you will hear of me. In a few years I shall return thence a rich nabob, and bring fine dowries for our three sisters." But the scheme was deferred and then abandoned. Salicetti had arranged for his own return to Paris, where he would be safe. Napoleon felt that flight was the only resort for him and his. Accordingly, on June eleventh, three days earlier than his patron, he and Joseph, accompanied by Fesch, embarked with their mother and the rest of the family, to join Lucien, who had remained at Toulon. The Jacobins of that city had received Lucien, as a Corsican sympathizer, with honor. Doubtless his family, homeless and destitute for their devotion to the republic, would find encouragement and help until some favorable turn in affairs should restore their country to France, and reinstate them not only in their old possessions, but in such new dignities as would fitly reward their long and painful devotion. Such, at least, appears to have been Napoleon's general idea. He was provided with a legal certificate that his family was one of importance and the richest in the department. The Convention had promised compensation to those who had suffered losses.

As had been hoped, on their arrival the Buonapartes were treated

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with every mark of distinction, and ample provision was made for their comfort. By act of the Convention, women and old men in such circumstances received seventy-five livres a month, infants forty-five livres. Lads received simply a present of twenty-five livres. With the preliminary payment of one hundred and fifty livres, which they promptly received, the Buonapartes were better off than they had been at home. Lucien had appropriated Napoleon's certificate of birth in order to appear older than he was, and, having now developed into a fluent demagogue, was soon earning a small salary in the commissary department of the army. Fesch also found a comfortable berth in the same department. Joseph calmly displayed Napoleon's commission in the national guard as his own, and received a higher place with a better salary. The sovereignty of the Convention was everywhere acknowledged, their revolutionary courts were established far and wide, and their legations, clothed with dictatorial power, were acknowledged in every camp of the land as supreme, superior even to the commanders-in-chief. It was not exactly a time for further military irregularities, and Napoleon, armed with a certificate from Salicetti that his presence in Corsica for the past six months had been necessary, betook himself to the army headquarters at Nice, where a detachment of his regiment was stationed.

When he arrived, no awkward questions were asked by the authorities. The town had but recently been captured, men were needed to hold it, and the Corsican refugee was promptly appointed captain of the shore battery. To casual observers he appeared perfectly content in this subordinate position. He still cherished the hope, it seems, that he might find some opportunity to lead a successful expedition against the little citadel of Ajaccio. Such a scheme, at all events, occupied him intermittently for nearly two years, or until it was banished forever by visions of a control far transcending the limits of his island home.

Not that the outcast Buonaparte was any longer exclusively a Corsican. It is impossible to conceive of a lot more pitiful or a fate more obdurate than his so far had been. There was little hereditary morality in his nature, and none had been inculcated by training; he had nothing of what is called vital piety, nor even sincere superstition. A butt and an outcast at a French school under the old régime, he had imbibed a bitter hatred for the land indelibly associated with such haughty privileges for the rich and such contemptuous disdain for the poor. He had not even the consolation of having received an education. His nature revolted at the religious formalism of priestcraft; his mind turned in disgust from the scholastic husks of its superficial knowledge. What he had learned came from inborn capacity, from desultory reading, and from the untutored imaginings of his garden at Brienne, his cave at Ajaccio, or his barrack chambers. What more plausible than that he should first turn to the land of his birth with some hope of happiness, usefulness, or even glory! What more mortifying than the revelation that in manhood he was too French for Corsica, as in boyhood he had been too Corsican for France!

The story of his reception and adventures in Corsica has no fascination; it is neither heroic nor satanic, but belongs to the dull and mediocre realism which makes up so much of commonplace life. It is difficult to find even a thread of continuity in it: there may be one as to purpose; there is none as to either conduct or theory. There is the passionate admiration of a southern nature for a hero as represented by the ideal Paoli. There is the equally southern quality of quick but transient hatred. The love of dramatic effect is shown at every turn, in the perfervid style of his writings, in the mock dignity of an edict issued from the grotto at Milleli, in the empty honors of a lieutenant-colonel without a real command, in the paltry style of an artillery inspector with no artillery but a few dismantled guns.

But the most prominent characteristic of the young man was his shiftiness, in both the good and bad senses of the word. He would perish with mortification rather than fail in devising some expedient to meet every emergency; he felt no hesitation in changing his point of view as experience destroyed an ideal or an unforeseen chance was to be seized and improved. Moreover, repeated failure did not dishearten him. Detesting garrison life, he neglected its duties, and endured punishment, but he secured regular promotion; defeated again and again before the citadel of Ajaccio, each time he returned undismayed to make a fresh trial under new auspices or in a new way.

He was no spendthrift, but he had no scruples about money. He was proud in the headship of his family, and reckless as to how he should support them, or should secure their promotion. Solitary in his boyhood, he had become in his youth a companion and leader; but his true friendships were not with his social equals, whom he despised, but with the lowly, whom he understood. Finally, here was a citizen of the world, a man without a country; his birthright was gone, for Corsica repelled him; France he hated, for she had never adopted him. He was almost without a profession, for he had neglected that of a soldier, and had failed both as an author and as a politician. He was apparently, too, without a single guiding principle; the world had been a harsh stepmother, at whose knee he had neither learned the truth nor experienced kindness. He appears consistent in nothing but in making the best of events as they occurred. So far he was a man neither much better nor much worse than the world in which he was born. He was quite as unscrupulous as those about him, but he was far greater than they in perspicacity, adroitness, adaptability, and persistence. During the period before his expulsion from Corsica these qualities of leadership were scarcely recognizable, but they existed. As yet, to all outward appearance, the little captain of artillery was the same slim, ill-proportioned, and rather insignificant youth; but at twenty-three he had had the experience of a much greater age. Unconscious of his powers, he had dreamed many day-dreams, and had acquired a habit of boastful conversation in the family circle; but, fully cognizant of the dangers incident to his place, and the unsettled conditions about him, he was cautious and reserved in the outside world.

CHAPTER XV

"THE SUPPER OF BEAUCAIRE"

REVOLUTIONARY MADNESS — UPRISING OF THE GIRONDISTS — CONVENTION FORCES BEFORE AVIGNON — BONAPARTE'S FIRST SUCCESS IN ARMS — ITS EFFECT UPON HIS CAREER — HIS POLITICAL PAMPHLET — THE GENIUS IT DISPLAYS — ACCEPTED AND PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY — SEIZURE OF TOULON BY THE ALLIES.

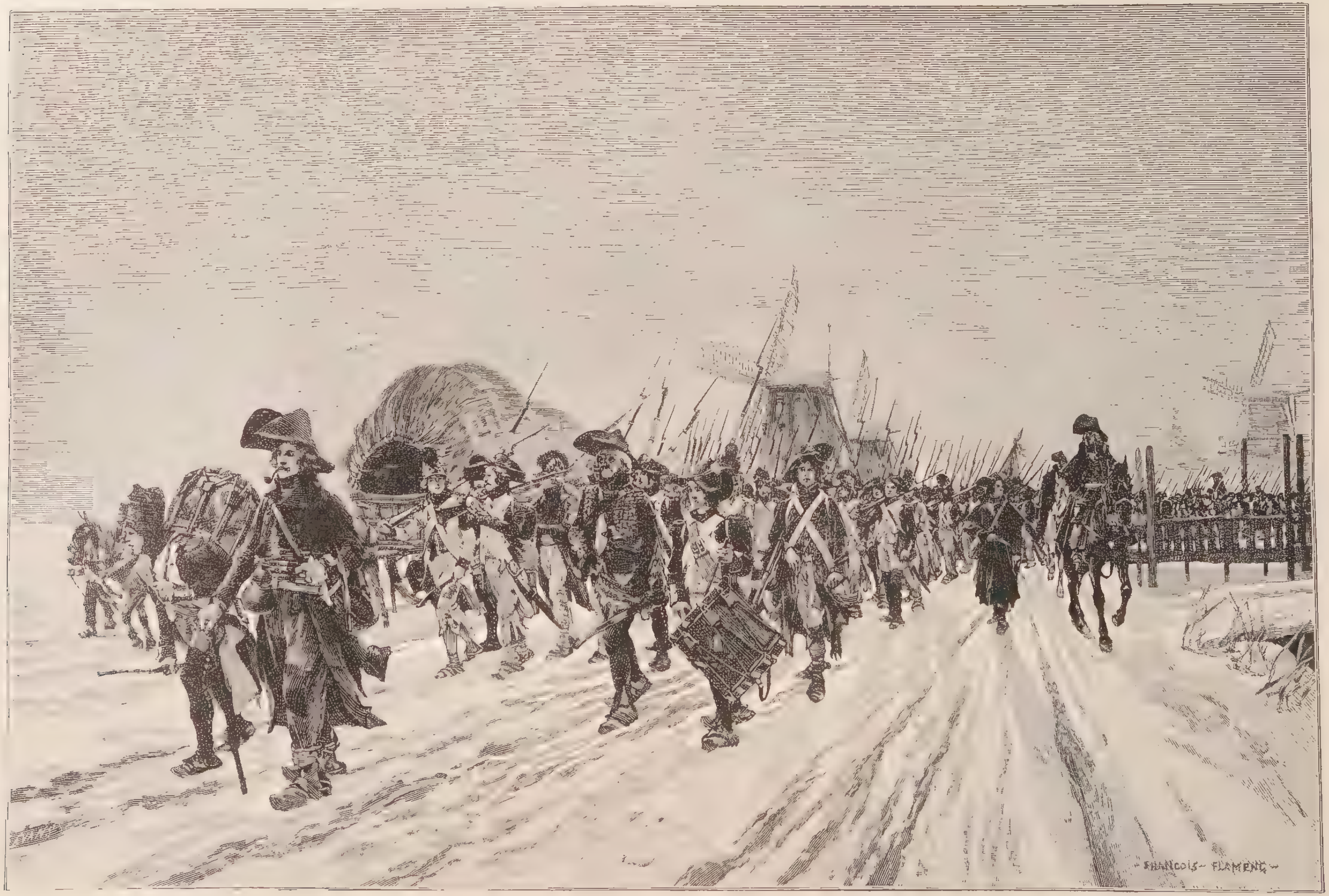
CHAP. XV
1793

IT was a tempestuous time in Provence when the Buonapartes arrived at Toulon. Their movements during the first few months cannot be determined; we only know that, after a short residence there, the family fled to Marseilles. Much, too, is obscure in regard even to Napoleon, soldier as he was. It seems as if this period of their history had been wilfully confused to conceal how intimate their connections with the Jacobins were. But the obscurity may also be due to the character of the times. Fleeing before the storms of Corsican revolution, they were caught in the whirlwind of French anarchy. The Girondists, after involving the country in a desperate foreign warfare, had shown themselves incompetent to carry it on. They had, therefore, to give way before the Jacobins, who, by the exercise of a reckless despotism, were able to display an unparalleled energy in its prosecution. Against their tyranny the moderate republicans and the royalists outside of Paris now made common cause, and civil war broke out in many places, including Vendée, the Rhone valley, and the southeast of France. Montesquieu declares that honor is the distinguishing characteristic of aristocracy: the emigrant aristocrats had been the first in France to throw honor and patriotism to the winds; many of their class who remained went further, displaying in Vendée and elsewhere a satanic vindictiveness. This shameful policy colored the entire civil war, and the bitterness in attack and retaliation that was shown in Marseilles, Lyons, Toulon, and elsewhere would have disgraced savages in a prehistoric age.

The westward slopes of the Alps were occupied by an army designated by that name, under the command of Kellermann; farther south and east lay the Army of Italy, under Brunet. Both these armies were expected to draw their supplies from the fertile country behind them, and to coöperate against the troops of Savoy and Austria, who had occupied the passes of lower Piedmont, and blocked the way into Lombardy. By this time the law for compulsory enlistment had been enacted, but the general excitement and topsyturvy management incident to such rapid changes in government and society, having caused the failure of the Sardinian expedition, had also prevented recruiting or equipment in either of these two divisions of the army. The outbreak of open hostilities in all the lands immediately to the westward momentarily paralyzed their operations; and when, shortly afterward, the Girondists overpowered the Jacobins in Marseilles, the defection of that city made it difficult for the so-called regulars, the soldiers of the Convention, even to obtain subsistence and hold the territory they already occupied.

The next move of the insurgent Girondists of Marseilles was in the direction of Paris, and by the first week of July they had reached Avignon on their way to join forces with their equally successful friends at Lyons. With characteristic zeal, the Convention had created an army to meet them. The new force was put under the command of Carteaux, a civilian, but a man of energy. According to directions received from Paris, he quickly advanced to cut the enemy in two by occupying the strategic point of Valence. This move was successfully made, Lyons was left to fight its own battle, and by the middle of July the general of the Convention was encamped before the walls of Avignon.

A few days later, Napoleon Buonaparte entered the camp, having arrived by devious ways, and after narrow escapes from the enemy's hands. This time he was absent from his post on duty. The works and guns at Nice being inadequate and worthless, he had been sent to secure supplies from the stores of Avignon when it should be conquered. Such were the straits of the needy republican general at Avignon that he immediately appointed his visitor to the command of a strong body of flying artillery. In the first subsequent move of the campaign Carteaux received a check. But the insurgents were more and more dis-



PUBLICATION AUTHORIZED BY THE ARTIST

ENGRAVED BY J. W. EVANS

THE CONQUEST OF HOLLAND

FROM THE PAINTING BY FRANÇOIS FLAMENG

The French, under Pichegru, taking advantage of the ice-bridges formed by the severe cold in the early part of 1795, overran Holland

mayed by the menacing attitude of the surrounding population, and on the twenty-fifth, in the very hour of victory, began their retreat. The road to Marseilles was thus clear, and the commander unwisely opened his lines to occupy the evacuated towns on his front. Buonaparte, whose battery did excellent service, advanced with the main army, but was ordered back to protect the rear by reorganizing and reconstructing the artillery park which had been dismantled in the assault.

This first successful feat of arms made a profound impression on Buonaparte's mind, and led to the decision which settled his career. His spirits were still low, for he was suffering from a return of his old malarial trouble. Moreover, his family had already been driven from Toulon by the uprising of the hostile party, and were now dependent on charity; the Corsican revolt against the Convention was virtually successful, and it was said that in the island the name of Buonaparte was considered as little less execrable than that of Buttafuoco. What must he do to get a decisive share in the surging, rolling tumult about him? The visionary boy was transformed into the practical man. Frenchmen were fighting, and winning glory everywhere, and among the men who were reaping laurels were some whom he had known and even despised at Brienne—Sergeant Pichegru, for instance. Ideas which he had momentarily entertained,—enlistment in the Russian army,[1] service with England, a career in the Indies, the return of the nabob,—all such visions were set aside forever, and an application was sent for a transfer from the Army of Italy to that of the Rhine. The suppression of the southern revolt would soon be accomplished, and inactivity ensue; but on the frontier of the north there was a warfare worthy of his powers, in which, if he could only attract the attention of the authorities, long service, rapid advancement, and lasting glory might all be secured.

But what must be the first step to secure notoriety here and now? How could that end be gained? The old instinct of authorship returned irresistibly, and in the long intervals of easy duty at Avignon, where he remained to complete the task assigned to him, Buonaparte wrote the "Supper of Beaucaire," his first literary work of real ability. As if by magic his style is utterly changed, being now concise, correct, and lucid. The opinions expressed are quite as thoroughly transformed, and display not only a clear political judgment, but an almost startling military insight. The setting of this notable repast is based on an actual experience, and is as follows: Five wayfarers — a native of Nîmes, a manufacturer from Montpellier, two merchants of Marseilles, and a soldier from Avignon — find themselves accidentally thrown together as table companions at an inn of Beaucaire, a little city round about which the civil war is raging. The conversation at supper turns on the events occurring in the neighborhood. The soldier explains the circumstances connected with the recent capture of Avignon, attributing the flight of the insurgents to the inability of any except veteran troops to endure the uncertainties of a siege. One of the travelers from Marseilles thinks the success but temporary, and recapitulates the resources of the moderates. The soldier retorts in a long refutation of that opinion. As a politician he shows how the insurgents have placed themselves in a false position by adopting extreme measures and alienating republican sympathy; as a military man he explains the strategic weakness of their position, and the futility of their operations, uttering many sententious phrases: "Self-conceit is the worst adviser"; "Good four- and eight-pound cannon are as effective for field work as pieces of larger caliber, and are in many respects preferable to them"; "It is an axiom of military science that the army which remains behind its intrenchments is beaten: experience and theory agree on this point."

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[1] The "Archive Russe" for 1866 states that in 1788 Napoleon Buonaparte applied for an engagement to Zaborowski, Potemkin's lieutenant, who was then with a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean. The statement may be true, and probably is, but there is no corroborative evidence to sustain it.

The conclusion of the conversation is a triumphant demonstration that the cause of the insurgents is already lost, an argument convicting them of really desiring not moderation, but a counter-revolution in their own interest, and of displaying a willingness to imitate the Vendeans, and call in foreign aid if necessary. In one remarkable passage the soldier grants that the Girondists may have been outlawed, imprisoned, and calumniated by the Mountain in its own selfish interest, but adds that the former "were lost without a civil war by means of which they could lay down the law to their enemies. It was for them your war was really useful. Had they merited their early reputation they would have thrown down their arms before the constitution and sacrificed their own interests to the public welfare. It is easier to cite Decius than to imitate him. To-day they have shown themselves guilty of the worst possible crimes; have, by their behavior, justified their proscription. The blood they have caused to flow has effaced the true services they had rendered." The Montpellier manufacturer is of opinion that, whether this be true or no, the Convention now represents the nation, and to refuse obedience to it is rebellion and counter-revolution. History knows no plainer statement that "might makes right" than this.

At last, then, the leader had shown himself in seizing the salient elements of a complicated situation, and the man of affairs had found a style in which to express his clear-cut ideas. When the tide turns it rises without interruption. Buonaparte's pamphlet was scarcely written before its value was discerned; for at that moment arrived one of those legations now representing the sovereignty of the Convention in every field of operations. This one was a most influential committee of three —Escudier, Ricord, and the younger brother of Robespierre. Accompanying them was a commission charged to renew the commissary stores in Corsica for the few troops still holding out in that island. Salicetti was at its head; the other member was Gasparin. Buonaparte, of course, found easy access to the favor of his compatriot Salicetti, and "The Supper of Beaucaire" was heard by the plenipotentiaries with attention. Its merit was immediately recognized both by Gasparin and by the younger Robespierre; in a few days the pamphlet was published at the expense of the state.

In the interval, while Buonaparte remained at Avignon, securing artillery supplies and writing a political pamphlet in support of the Jacobins, Carteaux had, on August twenty-fifth, 1793, taken Marseilles. The capture was celebrated by one of the bloodiest orgies of that horrible year. The Girondists of Toulon saw in the fate of those at Marseilles the lot apportioned to themselves. If the high contracting powers now banded against France had shown a sincere desire to quell Jacobin bestiality, they could on the first formation of the coalition easily have seized Paris. Instead, Austria and Prussia had shown the most selfish apathy in that respect, huckstering with each other and with Russia for their respective shares of Poland, the booty they were about to seize. The intensity of the Jacobin movement did not rouse them until the majority of the French people, vaguely grasping the elements of permanent value in the Revolution, and stung by foreign interference, rallied around the only standard which was firmly upheld,—that of the Convention,—and enabled that body within an incredibly short space of time to put forth tremendous energy. Then England, terrified into panic, drove Pitt to take effective measures, and displayed her resources in raising subsidies for her Continental allies, in goading the German powers to activity, in scouring every sea with her fleets. One of these was cruising off the French coast in the Mediterranean, and it was easy for the Girondists of Toulon to induce its commander to seize not only their splendid arsenals, but the fleet in their harbor as well—the only effective one, in fact, which at that time the French possessed. Without delay or hesitation, Hood, the English admiral, grasped the easy prize, and before long war-ships of the Spaniards, Neapolitans, and Sardinians were gathered to share in the defense of the town against the Convention forces. Soon the Girondist fugitives from Marseilles arrived, and were received with kindness. The place was provisioned, the gates were shut, and every preparation for desperate resistance was completed.

CHAPTER XVI

TOULON

THE JACOBIN POWER THREATENED — BONAPARTE'S FATE — HIS APPOINTMENT AT TOULON — HIS ABILITY AS AN ARTILLERIST — HIS NAME MENTIONED WITH DISTINCTION — HIS PLAN OF OPERATIONS — THE FALL OF TOULON — BONAPARTE A GENERAL OF BRIGADE — BEHAVIOR OF THE JACOBIN VICTORS — A CORSICAN PLOT — HORRORS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAP. XVI
1793

COUPLED as it was with other discouraging circumstances, the "treason of Toulon" struck a staggering blow at the Convention. The siege of Lyons was still in progress; the Piedmontese were entering Savoy, or the department of Mont Blanc, as it had been designated after its recent capture by France; the great city of Bordeaux was ominously silent and inactive; the royalists of Vendée were temporarily victorious; there was unrest in Normandy, and further violence in Brittany; the towns of Mainz, Valenciennes, and Condé had been evacuated, and Dunkirk was besieged by the Duke of York. The loss of Toulon would put a climax to such disasters, destroy the credit of the republic abroad and at home, perhaps bring back the Bourbons. Carnot had in the mean time come to the assistance of the Committee of Safety. Great as a military organizer and influential as a politician, he had already awakened the whole land to a still higher fervor, and had consolidated public sentiment in favor of his plans. In Dubois de Crancé he had an able lieutenant. Fourteen armies were soon to move and fight, directed by a single mind; discipline was about to be effectively strengthened because it was to be the discipline of the people by itself; the envoys of the Convention were to go to and fro, successfully laboring for common action and common enthusiasm in the executive, in both the fighting services, and in the nation. But as yet none of these

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miracles had been wrought, and, with Toulon lost, they might be forever impossible.

For a few days after the publication of his little book Buonaparte had a relapse into his queer, restless, wandering ways. He may have been on some secret confidential mission, as has been sometimes hinted, but nothing appears to show it. During August and early September he is said to have been at Valence, at Lyons, at Auxonne, and at Paris. He had evidently been thwarted in his plan of securing a position in the Army of the Rhine, or even of obtaining promotion in the one to which he already belonged. When finally he started to join the Army of Italy, somewhere on the road his destiny overtook him. According to the most probable account he was at Marseilles, where he had halted to visit his mother and sisters. There a compatriot, Cervoni, found him, and suggested that he should go to Toulon, whither the army of Carteaux had been ordered. With apparent hesitancy, and only after much persuasion, the disappointed suppliant consented to serve with his new-found friends for the siege. It was probably the twelfth of September when he arrived at the post where he was to lay the first solid foundation of his future renown.

The city of Toulon was now formally and nominally invested—that is, according to the then accepted general rules for such operations, but with no regard to those peculiarities of its site which only master minds could mark and use to the best advantage. The large double bay is protected from the southwest by a broad peninsula joined to the mainland by a very narrow isthmus, and thus opens southeastward to the Mediterranean. The great fortified city lies far within on the eastern shore of the inner harbor. It is protected on the landward side by an amphitheater of high hills, which leave to the right and left a narrow strip of rolling country between their lower slopes and the sea. The westward pass is commanded by Ollioules, which Carteaux had selected for his headquarters. On August twenty-ninth his vanguard seized the place, but they were almost immediately attacked and driven out by the allied armies, chiefly English troops brought in from Gibraltar. On September seventh the place was retaken. In the assault only a single French officer fell mortally wounded, but that one was a captain of artillery. Salicetti and his colleagues had received from the Minister of War a charge to look out for the citizen Buonaparte who wanted service on the Rhine. This and their own attachment determined them in the pregnant step they now took. The visiting captain was appointed to the vacant place. At the same time his mother received a grant of money. Fesch and Lucien were made storekeepers in the commissary department. Barras, who was the recruiting-officer of the Convention at Toulon, claims to have been the first to recognize Buonaparte's ability. He declares that the young Corsican was daily at his table, and that it was he himself who irregularly but efficiently secured the appointment of his new friend to active duty. But he also asserts what we know to be untrue, that Buonaparte was still lieutenant when they first met, and that he created him captain. It is likely, in view of their subsequent intimacy at Paris, that they were also intimate at Toulon, but the rest of Barras's story is a fabrication.

It was with no trembling hand that Buonaparte laid hold of his task. For an efficient artillery service artillery officers were essential, and there were almost none. In the ebb and flow of popular enthusiasm many republicans who had fallen back before the storms of factional excesses were now willing to come forward, and Napoleon, not publicly committed to the Jacobins, was able to win many capable assistants from among men of this class. His nervous restlessness found an outlet in erecting buttresses, mounting guns, and invigorating the whole service until a zealous activity of the most promising kind was displayed by officers and men alike. The only check was in the ignorant meddling of Carteaux, who, though energetic and zealous, was, after all, not a soldier, but a painter. Strange characters rose to the top in those troublous times: the painter's opponent at Avignon, the leader of the insurgents, had been a tailor. Buonaparte's ready pen stood him again in good stead, and he sent up a memorial to the ministry, explaining the situation, and asking for the appointment of an artillery general with full powers. The commissioners transmitted the paper to Paris, and appointed the memorialist to the higher rank of acting commander; but his further activity was checked by lack of material.

At length the artist was removed from command, and a physician was appointed in his stead. The doctor was an ardent patriot who had distinguished himself at the siege of Lyons, which had fallen on October ninth. But on arriving at Toulon the citizen soldier was awed by the magnitude of his new work, and was transferred at his own suggestion to an easier station in the Pyrenees. Dugommier, a professional soldier, was finally appointed commander-in-chief, and Duteil, a brother of Buonaparte's old friend and commander, was made general of artillery. Abundant supplies arrived at the same time from Lyons. On November twentieth the new officers took charge, two days later a general reconnaissance was made, and within a short time the investment was completed. On the thirtieth there was a sally from the town directed against Buonaparte's batteries. It was successfully repulsed. The event was made important by the capture of General O'Hara, the English commandant. In the "Moniteur" of December seventh the name of Buona Parte is mentioned for the first time, and as among the most distinguished in the action.

The councils of war before Dugommier's arrival had been numerous and turbulent, although the solitary plan of operations suggested would have been adequate only for capturing an inland town, and probably not even for that. From the beginning Buonaparte had explained to his colleagues the special features of their task, but all in vain. He reasoned that Toulon depended for its resisting power on the Allies and their fleets, and must be reduced from the side next the sea. The English themselves understood this when they seized and fortified the redoubt of Fort Mulgrave, known also as Little Gibraltar, on the tongue of land separating, to the westward, the inner from the outer bay. That post must be taken. From the very moment of his arrival this simple but clever conception was urged on the new artillery general, and, with others from the same author, was adopted. At the same time it was determined that operations should also be directed against two other strong outposts, one to the north, the other to the northeast, of the town.

Finally, on December seventeenth, after careful preparation, a concerted attack was made at all three points. It was successful in every part; the enemy was not only driven within the interior works, but by the fall of Little Gibraltar his communication with the sea was endangered. Since, therefore, the supporting fleets could no longer remain in a situation so precarious, the besieged at once made ready for departure, embarking the troops and many of the inhabitants. In a few days the city was evacuated, and the foreign war vessels sailed away. The news of this decisive victory was despatched without a moment's delay to the Convention. The names of Salicetti, Robespierre, Ricord, Fréron, and Barras are mentioned in Dugommier's letters as those of men who had won distinction in various posts; that of Buonaparte does not occur.

There was either jealousy of his merits, which are declared by his enemies to have been unduly vaunted, or else his share had been more insignificant than is generally supposed. He related at St. Helena that during the operations before Toulon he had had three horses killed under him, and showed Las Cases a great scar on his thigh which he said had been received in a bayonet charge at Toulon. "Men wondered at the fortune which kept me invulnerable; I always concealed my dangers in mystery." The hypothesis of his insignificance appears unlikely when we examine the memoirs written by his contemporaries, and consider the precise traditions of a later generation; it becomes untenable in view of what happened on the next day, when the commissioners nominated him for the office of general of brigade, a rank which in the exchange of prisoners with the English was reckoned as equal to that of lieutenant-general. In a report written on the nineteenth to the Minister of War, Duteil speaks in the highest terms of Buonaparte. "A great deal of science, as much intelligence, and too much bravery; such is a faint sketch of the virtues of this rare officer. It rests with you, Minister, to retain them for the glory of the Republic."

On December twenty-fourth the Convention received the news of victory. It was really their reprieve, for news of disaster would have cut short their career. Jubilant over a prompt success, their joy was savage and infernal. With the eagerness of vampires they at once sent two commissioners to wipe the name of Toulon from the map, and its inhabitants from the earth. Fouché, later chief of police and Duke of Otranto under Napoleon, went down from Lyons to see the sport, and wrote to his friend the arch-murderer Collet d'Herbois that they were celebrating the victory in but one way. "This night we send two hundred and thirteen rebels into hell fire." The fact is, no one ever knew how many hundreds or thousands of the Toulon Girondists were swept together and destroyed by the fire of cannon and musketry. Fréron, one of the commissioners, desired to leave not a single rebel alive. Dugommier would listen to no such proposition for a holocaust. Marmont declares that Buonaparte and his artillerymen pleaded for mercy, but in vain.

Running like a thread through all these events was a counter-plot.

The Corsicans at Toulon were persons of importance, and had shown their mettle. Salicetti, Buonaparte, Arena, and Cervoni were now men of mark; the two latter had, like Buonaparte, been promoted, though to much lower rank. As Salicetti declared in a letter written on December twenty-eighth, they were scheming to secure vessels and arm them for an expedition to Corsica. But for the time their efforts came to naught; and thenceforward Salicetti seemed to lose all interest in Corsican affairs, becoming more and more involved in the ever madder rush of events in France.

There was nothing strange in this: a common politician could not remain insensible to the course or the consequences of the malignant anarchy now raging throughout France. The massacres at Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon were the reply to the horrors of like or worse nature perpetrated in Vendée by the royalists. Danton having used the Paris sections to overawe the Girondist majority of the Convention, Marat gathered his riotous band of sansculottes, and hounded the discredited remnant of the party to death, flight, or arrest. His bloody career was ended only by Charlotte Corday's dagger. Passions were thus inflamed until even Danton's conduct appeared calm, moderate, and inefficient, when compared with the reckless bloodthirstiness of Hébert, now leader of the Exagérés. The latter prevailed, the Vendeans were defeated, and Citizen Carrier of Nantes in three months took fifteen thousand human lives by his fiendishly ingenious systems of drowning and shooting. In short, France was chaos, and the Salicettis of the time might hope for anything, or fear everything, in the throes of her disorder. Not so a man like Buonaparte. His instinct led him to stand in readiness at the parting of the ways. Others might choose and press forward; he gave no sign of being moved by current events, but stood with his eye still fixed, though now in a backward gaze, on Corsica, ready, if interest or self-preservation required it, for another effort to seize and hold it as his own. Determined and revengeful, he was again, through the confusion in France, to secure means for his enterprise, and this time on a scale proportionate to the difficulty.

CHAPTER XVII

A JACOBIN GENERAL

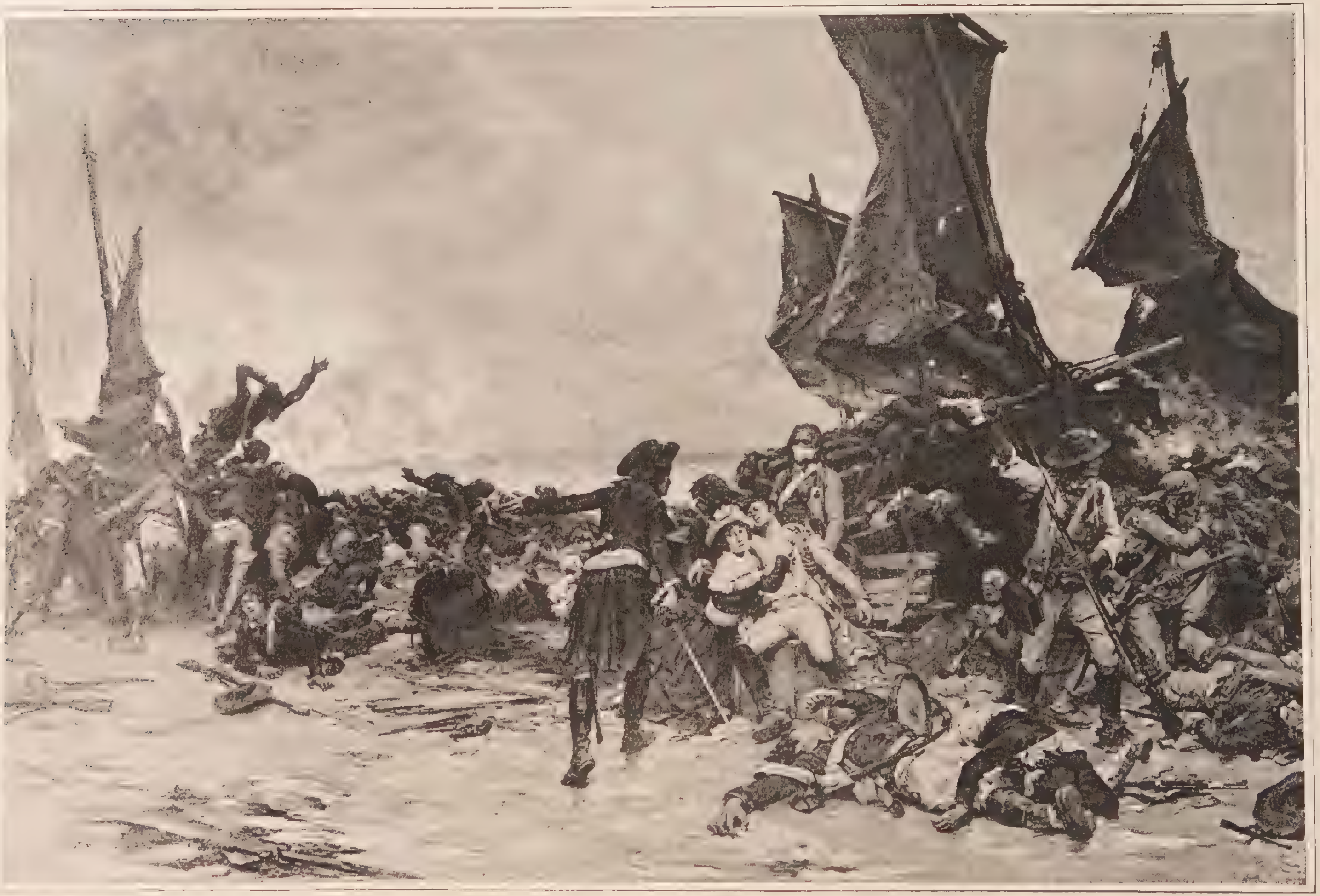
TRANSFORMATION IN BONAPARTE'S CHARACTER — CONFIRMED AS A FRENCH GENERAL — CONDUCT OF HIS BROTHERS — NAPOLEON'S CAUTION — HIS REPORT ON MARSEILLES — THE NEW FRENCH ARMY — BONAPARTE THE JACOBIN LEADER — HOSTILITIES WITH AUSTRIA AND SARDINIA — ENTHUSIASM OF THE FRENCH TROOPS — BONAPARTE IN SOCIETY — HIS PLAN FOR AN ITALIAN CAMPAIGN.

HITHERTO prudence had not been characteristic of Buonaparte: his escapades and disobedience had savored rather of recklessness. The whole outlook having changed since his final flight to France, his conduct now began to reveal a definite plan — to be marked by punctilious obedience, sometimes even by an almost puerile caution. His family was homeless and penniless; their only hope for a livelihood was in rising with the Jacobins, who appeared to be growing more influential every hour. Through the powerful friends that Napoleon had made among the representatives of the Convention, men like the younger Robespierre, Fréron, and Barras, much had already been gained. If his nomination to the office of general of brigade were confirmed, as it was almost certain to be, the rest would follow, since, with his innate capacity for adapting himself to circumstances, he had during the last few weeks successfully cultivated his power of pleasing, captivating the hearts of Marmont, Junot, and many others.

With such strong chances in his favor, it appeared to Buonaparte that no stumbling-block of technicality should be thrown in the path of his promotion. Accordingly, in the record of his life sent up to Paris, he puts his entrance into the service over a year earlier than it actually occurred, omits as unessential details some of the places in which he had lived and some of the companies in which he had served, declares that he had commanded a battalion at the capture of Magdalena, and, finally, denies categorically that he was ever noble. To this paper, which minimizes nearly to the vanishing-point all mention of Corsica, and emphasizes his services as a Frenchman by its insidious omissions, the overdriven officials in Paris took no exception; and on February sixth, 1794, he was confirmed, receiving an appointment for service in the new and regenerated Army of Italy, which had replaced as if by magic the ragged, shoeless, ill-equipped, and half-starved remnants of troops in and about Nice that in the previous year had been dignified by the same title. This gambler had not drawn the first prize in the lottery, but what he had secured was enough to justify his course, and confirm his confidence in fate. Eight years and three months nominally in the service, out of which in reality he had been absent four years and ten months either on furlough or without one, and already a general! Neither blind luck, nor the revolutionary epoch, nor the superlative ability of the man, but a compound of all these, had brought this marvel to pass. It did not intoxicate, but still further sobered, the beneficiary. This effect was partly due to an experience which demonstrated that strong as are the chains of habit, they are more easily broken than those which his associates forge about a man.

In the interval between nomination and confirmation the young aspirant, through the fault of his friends, was involved in a most serious risk. Salicetti, and the Buonaparte brothers, Joseph, Lucien, and Louis, went wild with exultation over the fall of Toulon, and began by reckless assumptions and untruthful representations to reap an abundant harvest of spoils. Joseph, by the use of his brother's Corsican commission, had posed as a lieutenant-colonel; he was now made a commissary-general of the first class. Louis, without regard to his extreme youth, was promoted to be adjutant-major of artillery — a dignity which was short-lived, for he was soon after ordered to the school at Châlons as a cadet, but which served, like the greater success of Joseph, to tide over a crisis. Lucien retained his post as keeper of the commissary stores in St. Maximin, where he was the leading Jacobin, styling himself Lucius Brutus, and rejoicing in the sobriquet of "the little Robespierre."

The positions of Lucien and Louis were fantastic even for revolutionary times. Napoleon was fully aware of the danger, and was cor-



PUBLICATION AUTHORIZED BY THE ARTIST

THE BATTLE OF QUIBERON

FROM THE PAINTING BY P. OUTIN. EXHIBITED IN THE SALON OF 1880

In July, 1795, six thousand French "emigrés" were landed at Quiberon in Brittany, under the protection of an English fleet. Hoche, at the head of the republican forces, attacked them fiercely, and only about 1800 of them escaped to the English vessels

respondingly circumspect. It was possibly at his own suggestion that he was appointed, on December twenty-sixth, 1793, inspector of the shore fortifications, and ordered to proceed immediately on an inspection of the Mediterranean coast as far as Mentone. The expedition removed him from all temptation to an unfortunate display of exultation or anxiety, and gave him a new chance to display his powers. He performed his task with the thoroughness of an expert; but in so doing, his zeal played him a sorry trick, eclipsing the caution of the revolutionist by the eagerness of the sagacious general. In his report to the Minister of War he comprehensively discussed both the fortification of the coast and the strengthening of the navy, which were alike indispensable to the wonderful scheme of operations in Italy which he appears to have been already revolving in his mind. The Army of Italy, and in fact all southeastern France, depended at the moment for sustenance on the commerce of Genoa, professedly a neutral state and friendly to the French republic. This essential trade could be protected only by making interference from the English and Spaniards impossible, or at least difficult.

Arrived at Marseilles, and with these ideas occupying his whole mind, Buonaparte regarded the situation as serious. The British and Spanish fleets swept the seas, and were virtually blockading all the Mediterranean ports of France. At Toulon, as has been told, they actually entered, and departed only after losing control of the promontory which forms the harbor. There is a similar conformation of the ground at the entrance to the port of Marseilles, but Buonaparte found that the fortress which occupied the point had been dismantled. With the instinct of a strategist, and with no other thought than that of his duties as inspector, he sat down, and on January fourth, 1794, wrote a most impolitic recommendation that the fortification should be restored in such a way as to "command the town." These words almost certainly referred both to the possible renewal by the conquered French royalists and other malcontents of their efforts to secure Marseilles, and to a conceivable effort on the part of the Allies to seize the harbor. Now it happened that the liberals of the town had regarded this very stronghold as their Bastille, and it had been dismantled by them in emulation of their brethren of Paris. The language and motive of the report were therefore capable of misinterpretation. A storm at once arose among the Marseilles Jacobins against both Buonaparte and his superior, General Lapoype; they were both denounced to the Convention, and in due time, about the end of February, were both summoned before the bar of that body. In the mean time Buonaparte's nomination as general of brigade had been confirmed, his commission arriving at Marseilles on February sixteenth. It availed nothing toward restoring him to popularity; on the contrary, the masses grew more suspicious and more menacing. He therefore returned to the protection of Salicetti and Robespierre at Toulon, whence by their advice he despatched to Paris by special messenger a poor-spirited exculpatory letter, admitting that the only use of restoring the fort would be to "command the town," that is, control it by military power in case of revolution. Having by this language pusillanimously acknowledged a fault which he had not committed, the writer, by the advice of Salicetti and Robespierre, refused to obey the formal summons of the Convention when it came. Those powerful protectors made vigorous representations to their friends in Paris, and Buonaparte was saved. On April first, 1794, he assumed the duties of his new command, reporting himself at Nice. Lapoype went to Paris, appeared at the bar of the Convention, and was triumphantly acquitted.

A single circumstance changed the French Revolution from a sectarian dogma into a national movement. By the exertions and plans of Carnot the effective force of the French army had been raised in less than two years from one hundred and twelve thousand to the astonishing figure of over seven hundred and thirty thousand. The discipline was now rigid, and the machine was perfectly adapted to the workman's hand, although for lack of money the equipment was still sadly defective. In the Army of Italy were nearly sixty-seven thousand men, a number which included all the garrisons and reserve of the coast towns and of Corsica. Its organization, like that of the other portions of the military power, had been simplified, and so strengthened. There were a commander-in-chief, a chief of staff, three generals of division, of whom Masséna was one, and thirteen generals of brigade, of whom one, Buonaparte, was the commander and inspector of artillery.

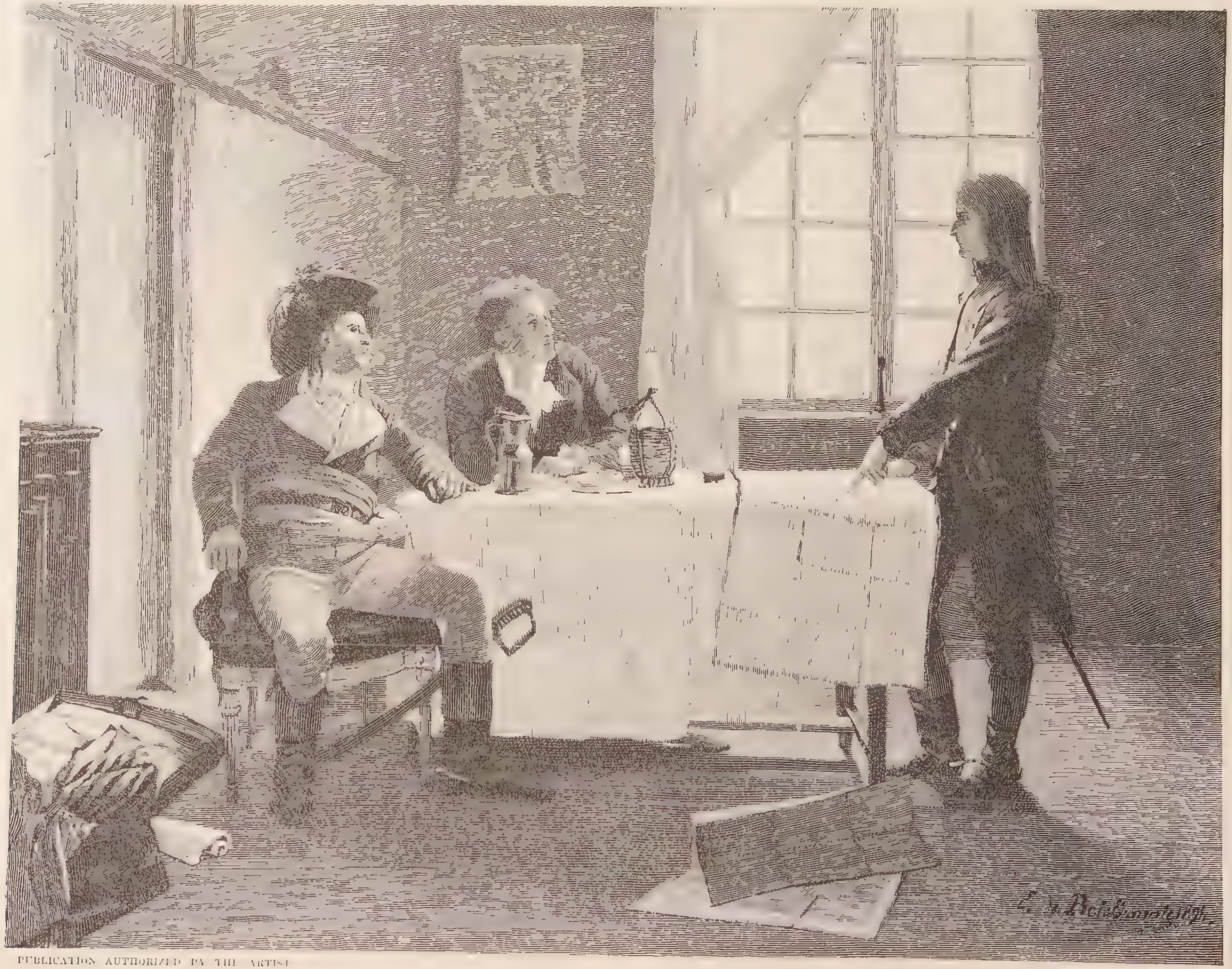
The younger Robespierre, with Ricord and Salicetti, were the "representatives of the people." The first of these was, to outward appearance, the leading spirit of the whole organism, and to his support Buonaparte was now thoroughly committed. The young artillery commander was considered by all at Nice to be a pronounced "Montagnard," that is, an extreme Jacobin. Augustin Robespierre had quickly learned to see and hear with the eyes and ears of his Corsican friend, whose fidelity seemed assured by hatred of Paoli and by a desire to recover the family estates in his native island. Whatever the ties which bound them at first, the ascendancy of Buonaparte was thorough in the end. His were the suggestions and the enterprises, the political conceptions, the military plans, the devices to obtain ways and means. It was probably his advice which was determinative in the scheme of operations finally adopted. A select third of the troops were chosen and divided into three divisions to assume the offensive, under Masséna's direction, against the almost impregnable posts of the Austrians and Sardinians in the upper Apennines. The rest were held in garrison partly as a reserve, partly to overawe the newly conquered department of which Nice was the capital.

Genoa now stood in a peculiar relation to France. Her oligarchy, though called a republic, was in spirit the antipodes of French democracy. Her trade was essential to France, but English influence predominated in her councils and English force worked its will in her domains. In October, 1793, a French supply-ship had been seized by an English squadron in the very harbor. Soon afterward, by way of rejoinder to this act of violence, the French minister at Genoa was officially informed from Paris that as it appeared no longer possible for a French army to reach Lombardy by the direct route through the Apennines, it might be necessary to advance along the coast through Genoese territory. This announcement was no threat, but serious earnest; the plan had been carefully considered and was before long to be put into execution. It was merely as a feint that in April, 1794, hostilities were formally opened against Sardinia and Austria. Masséna seized Ventimiglia on the sixth. Advancing by Oneglia and Ormea, in the valley of the Stura, he turned the position of the allied Austrians and Sardinians, thus compelling them to evacuate their strongholds one by one, until on May seventh the pass of Tenda, leading direct into Lombardy, was abandoned by them.

The result of this movement was to infuse new enthusiasm into the army, while at the same time it set free, for offensive warfare, large numbers of the garrison troops in places now no longer in danger. Masséna wrote in terms of exultation of the devotion and endurance which his troops had shown in the sacred name of liberty. "They know how to conquer and never complain. Marching barefoot, and often without rations, they abuse no one, but sing the loved notes of '*Ça ira*'—'T will go, 't will go! We 'll make the creatures that surround the despot at Turin dance the Carmagnole!" Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia, was an excellent specimen of the benevolent despot; it was he they meant. Augustin Robespierre wrote to his brother Maximilien, in Paris, that they had found the country before them deserted: forty thousand souls had fled from the single valley of Oneglia, having been terrified by the accounts of French savagery to women and children, and of their impiety in devastating the churches and religious establishments.

Whether the phenomenal success of this short campaign, which lasted but a month, was expected or not, nothing was done to improve it, and the advancing battalions suddenly stopped, as if to make the impression that they could go farther only by way of Genoese territory. Buonaparte would certainly have shared in the campaign had it been a serious attack; but, except to bring captured stores from Oneglia, he did nothing, devoting the months of May and June to the completion of his shore defenses, and living at Nice with his mother and her family. That famous and coquettish town was now the center of a gay republican society in which Napoleon and his pretty sisters were important persons. They were the constant companions of young Robespierre and Ricord. The former, amazed by the activity of his friend's brain, the scope of his plans, and the terrible energy which marked his preparations, wrote of Napoleon that he was a man of "transcendent merit." Marmont, speaking of Napoleon's charm at this time, says: "There was so much future in his mind. . . . He had acquired an ascendancy over the representatives which it is impossible to describe." He also declares, and Salicetti too repeatedly asseverated, that Buonaparte was the "man, the plan-maker," of the Robespierres.

The impression which Salicetti and Marmont expressed was doubtless due to the conclusions of a council of war held on May twentieth by the leaders of the two armies—of the Alps and of Italy—to concert a plan of coöperation. Naturally each group of generals desired the foremost place for the army it represented. Buonaparte overrode all objections, and compelled the acceptance of a scheme entirely his own, which with some additions and by careful elaboration ultimately developed into the famous plan of campaign in Italy. But affairs in Genoa



PUBLICATION AUTHORIZED BY THE ARTIST

ENGRAVED BY E. H. DEL'ORME

BONAPARTE, TURREAU, AND VOLNEY AT NICE IN 1793

FROM THE PAINTING BY E. BOISLECOMTE

Bonaparte laid before the others the plan of campaign in Italy which he executed as general in chief, three years later

were becoming so menacing that for the moment they demanded the exclusive attention of the French authorities. Austrian troops had disregarded her neutrality and trespassed on her territory; the land was full of French deserters, and England, recalling her successes in the same line during the American Revolution, had established a press in the city for printing counterfeit French money, which was sent by secret mercantile communications to Marseilles, and there was put in circulation. It was consequently soon determined to amplify greatly the plan of campaign, and likewise to send a mission to Genoa. Buonaparte was himself appointed the envoy, and thus became the pivot of both movements — that against Piedmont and that against Genoa.

CHAPTER XVIII

VICISSITUDES IN WAR AND DIPLOMACY

Signs of Maturity—The Mission to Genoa—Course of the French Republic—The "Terror"—Thermidor—Bonaparte a Scapegoat—His Prescience—Adventures of his Brothers—Napoleon's Defense of his French Patriotism—Bloodshedding for Amusement—New Expedition against Corsica—Bonaparte's Advice for its Conduct.

Chap. XVIII
1794

BUONAPARTE'S plan for combining operations against both Genoa and Sardinia was at first hazy. In his earliest efforts to expand and clarify it, he wrote a rambling document, still in existence, which draws a contrast between the opposite policies to be adopted with reference to Italy and Spain. In it he also calls attention to the scarcity of officers suitable for concerted action in a great enterprise, and a remark concerning the course to be pursued in this particular case contains the germ of his whole military system. "Combine your forces in a war, as in a siege, on one point. The breach once made, equilibrium is destroyed, everything else is useless, and the place is taken. Do not conceal, but concentrate, your attack." In the matter of politics he sees Germany as the main prop of opposition to democracy; Spain is to be dealt with on the defensive, Italy on the offensive. But, contrary to what he actually did in the following year, he advises against proceeding too far into Piedmont, lest the adversary should gain the advantage of position. This paper Robespierre the younger had in his pocket when he left for Paris, summoned to aid his brother in difficulties which were now pressing fast upon him.

Ricord was left behind to direct, at least nominally, the movements both of the armies and of the embassy to Genoa. Buonaparte continued to be the real power. Military operations having been suspended to await the result of diplomacy, his instructions from Ricord were drawn so as to be loose and merely formal. On July eleventh he started from Nice, reaching his destination three days later. During the week of his stay—for he left again on the twenty-first—the envoy made his representations, and laid down his ultimatum that the republic of Genoa should preserve absolute neutrality, neither permitting troops to pass over its territories, nor lending aid in the construction of military roads, as she was charged with doing secretly. His success in overawing the oligarchy was complete, and a written promise of compliance to these demands was made by the Doge. Buonaparte arrived again in Nice on the twenty-eighth. We may imagine that as he traveled the romantic road between the mountains and the sea, the rising general and diplomat indulged in many rosy dreams, probably feeling already on his shoulders the insignia of a commander-in-chief. But he was returning to disgrace, if not to destruction. A week after his arrival came the stupefying news that the hour-glass had once again been reversed, that on the very day of his own exultant return to Nice Robespierre's head had fallen, that the Mountain was shattered, and that the land was again staggering to gain its balance after another political earthquake.

The shock had been awful, but it was directly traceable to the accumulated disorders of Jacobin rule. A rude and vigorous but eerie order of things had been inaugurated on November twenty-fourth, 1793, by the so-called republic. There was first the new calendar, in which the year I began on September twenty-second, 1792, the day on which the republic had been proclaimed. In it were the twelve thirty-day months, with their names of vintage, fog, and frost; of snow, rain, and wind; of bud, flower, and meadow; of seed, heat, and harvest: the whole terminated most unpoetically by the five or six supplementary days named sansculottides,—sansculottes meaning without knee-breeches, a garment confined to the upper classes; that is, with long trousers like the common people,—and these days were so named because they were to be a holiday for the long-trousered populace which was to use the new reckoning. There was next the new, strange, and unhallowed spectacle seen in history for the first time, the realization of a nightmare—a whole people finally turned into an army, and at war with nearly all the world. The reforming Girondists had created the situation, and the Jacobins, with grim humor, were unflinchingly facing the logical consequences of such audacity. Carnot had given the watchword of attack in mass and with superior numbers; the times gave the frenzied courage of sentimental exaltation. Before the end of 1793 the foreign enemies of France, though not conquered, had been checked on the frontier; the outbreak of civil war in Vendée had been temporarily suppressed; both Lyons and Toulon had been retaken.

The Jacobins were nothing if not thorough; and here was another new and awful thing—the "Terror"—which had broken loose with its foul furies of party against party through all the land. It seemed at last as if it were exhausting itself, though for a time it had grown in intensity as it spread in extent. It had created three factions in the Mountain. Early in 1794 there remained but a little handful of avowed and still eager terrorists in the Convention—Hébert and his friends. These were the atheists who had abolished religion and the past, bowing down before the fetish which they dubbed Reason. They were seized and put to death on March twenty-fourth. There then remained the cliques of Danton and Robespierre; the former claiming the name of moderates, and telling men to be calm, the latter with no principle but devotion to a person who claimed to be the regenerator of society. These hero-worshipers were for a time victorious. Danton, like Hébert, was foully murdered, and Robespierre remained alone, virtually dictator. But his theatrical conduct in decreeing by law the existence of a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul, and in organizing tawdry festivals to supply the place of worship, utterly embittered against him both atheists and pious people. In disappointed rage at his failure, he laid aside the characters of prophet and mild saint to give vent to his natural wickedness and become a devil.

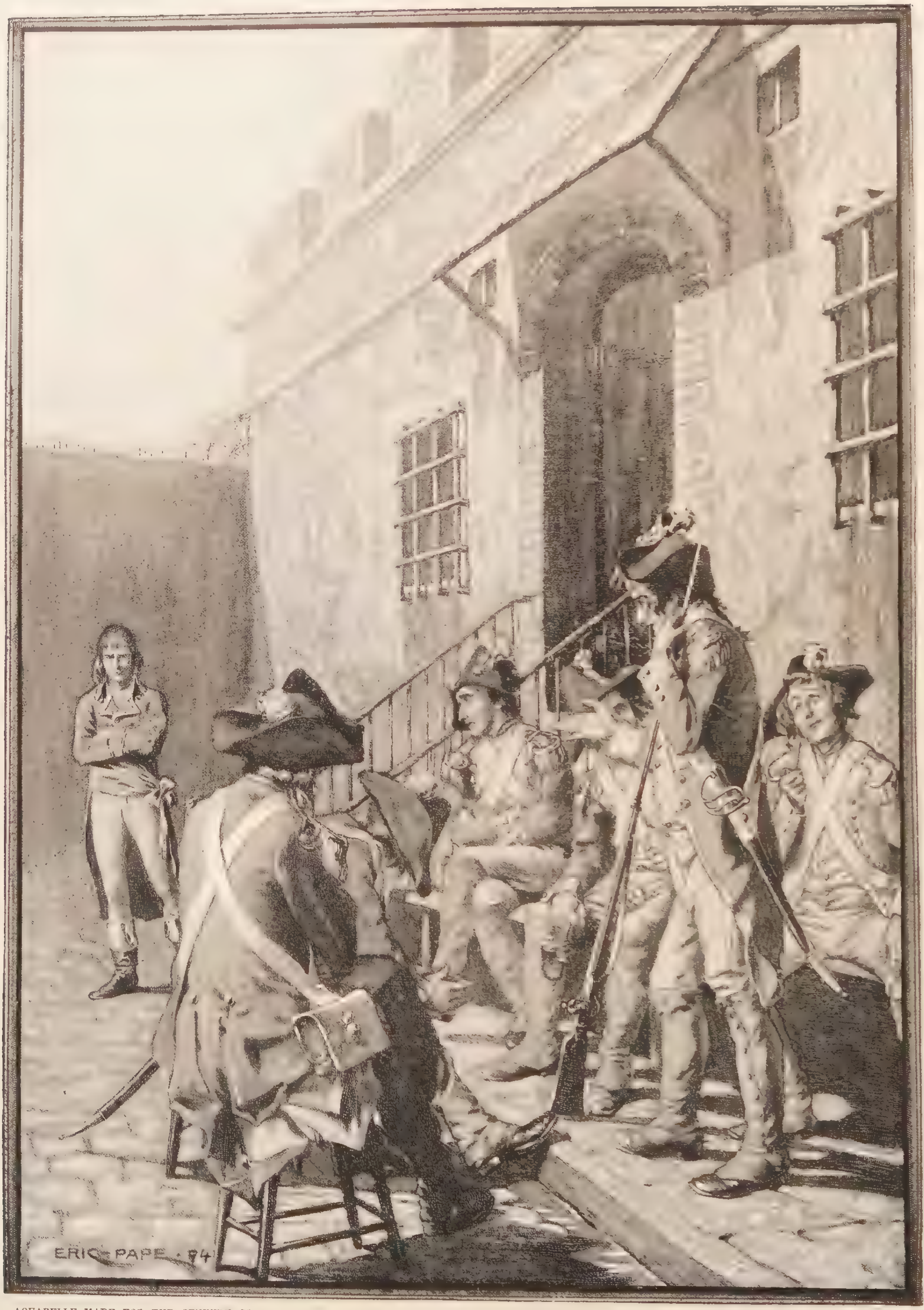
During the long days of June and July there raged again a carnival of blood, known to history as the "Great Terror." In less than seven weeks upward of twelve hundred victims were immolated. The unbridled license of the guillotine broadened as it ran. First the aristocrats had fallen, then royalty, then their sympathizers, then the hated rich, then the merely well-to-do, and lastly anybody not cringing to existing power. The reaction against Robespierre was one of universal fear. Its inception was the work of Tallien, Fouché, Barras, Carrier, Fréron, and the like, men of vile character, who knew that if Robespierre could maintain his pose of the "Incorruptible" their doom was sealed. In this sense

Robespierre was what Napoleon called him at St. Helena, "the scapegoat of the Revolution." The uprising of these accomplices was, however, the opportunity long desired by the better elements in Parisian society, and the two antipodal classes made common cause. Dictator as Robespierre wished to be, he was formed of other stuff, for when the reckoning came his brutal violence was cowed. On July twenty-seventh (the ninth of Thermidor), the Convention turned on him in rebellion, extreme radicals and moderate conservatives combining for the effort. Terrible scenes were enacted. The sections of Paris were divided, some for the Convention, some for Robespierre. The artillerymen who were ordered by the latter to batter down the part of the Tuileries where his enemies were sitting hesitated and disobeyed; at once all resistance to the decrees of the Convention died out. The dictator would have been his own executioner, but his faltering terrors stopped him midway in his half-committed suicide. He and his brother, with their friends, were seized, and beheaded on the morrow. With the downfall of Robespierre went the last vestige of social or political authority; for the Convention was no longer trusted by the nation — the only organized power with popular support which was left was the army.

This was the news which, traveling southward, finally reached Toulon, Marseilles, and Nice, cities where Robespierre's stanchest adherents were flaunting their newly gained importance. No wonder if the brains of common men reeled. The recent so-called parties had disappeared for the moment like wraiths. The victorious group in the Convention, now known as the Thermidorians, was compounded of elements from them both, and claimed to represent the whole of France as the wretched factions who had so long controlled the government had never done. Where now should those who had been active supporters of the late administration turn for refuge? The Corsicans who had escaped from the island at the same time with Salicetti and the Buonapartes were nearly all with the Army of Italy. They had been given employment, but, having failed to keep Corsica for France, were not in high favor. It had already been remarked in the Committee of Public Safety that their patriotism was less manifest than their disposition to enrich themselves. This too was the opinion of many among their own countrymen, especially of their own partizans shut up in Bastia or Calvi and deserted. Salicetti, ever ready for emergencies, was not disconcerted by this one; and with adroit baseness turned informer, denouncing as a suspicious schemer his former protégé and lieutenant, of whose budding greatness he was now well aware. He was both jealous and alarmed.

Buonaparte's mission to Genoa had been openly political; secretly it was also a military reconnaissance, and his confidential instructions, virtually dictated by himself, had unfortunately leaked out. They had directed him to examine the fortifications in and about both Savona and Genoa, to investigate the state of the Genoese artillery, to inform himself as to the behavior of the French envoy to the republic, to learn as much as possible of the intentions of the oligarchy — in short, to gather all information useful for the conduct of a war "the result of which it is impossible to foresee." Buonaparte, knowing that he had trodden dangerous ground in his unauthorized and secret dealings with the younger Robespierre, and probably foreseeing the coming storm, began to shorten sail immediately upon reaching Nice. Either he was prescient and felt the new influences in the air, or else a letter now in the war office at Paris, and purporting to have been written on August seventh, to Tilly, the French agent at Genoa, is an antedated fabrication written later for Salicetti's use. Speaking in this paper of Robespierre the younger, he said: "I was a little touched by the catastrophe, for I loved him and thought him spotless. But were it my own father, I would stab him to the heart if he aspired to become a tyrant." If the letter be genuine, as is probable, the writer was very far-sighted. He knew that its contents would speedily reach Paris in the despatches of Tilly, so that it was virtually a public renunciation of Jacobinism at the earliest possible date, an anchor to windward in the approaching tempest. But the ruse was of no avail; he was first superseded in his command, then arrested on August tenth, and, fortunately for himself, imprisoned two days later in Fort Carré, near Antibes, instead of being sent direct to Paris as some of his friends were. This temporary shelter from the devastating blast he owed to Salicetti, who would, no doubt, without hesitation have destroyed a friend for his own safety, but was willing enough to spare him if not driven to extremity.

As the true state of things in Corsica began to be known in France, there was a general disposition to blame and punish the influential men who had brought things to such a desperate pass and made the loss of the island probable, if not certain. Salicetti, Multedo, and the rest quickly unloaded the whole blame on Buonaparte's shoulders, so that he had many enemies in Paris. Thus by apparent harshness to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AQUARELLE MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

BONAPARTE UNDER ARREST, AUGUST, 1794

FROM THE AQUARELLE BY ERIC PAPE

one whom he still considered a subordinate, the real culprit escaped suspicion. Assured of immunity from punishment himself, Salicetti was content with his rival's humiliation, and felt no real rancor toward the family. This is clear from his treatment of Louis Buonaparte, who had fallen from place and favor along with his brother, but was by Salicetti's influence soon afterward made an officer of the home guard at Nice. Joseph had rendered himself conspicuous in the very height of the storm by a brilliant marriage; but neither he nor Fesch was arrested, and both managed to pull through with whole skins. The noisy Lucien was also married, but to a girl who, though respectable, was poor; and in consequence he was thoroughly frightened at the thought of losing his means of support. But though menaced with arrest, he was sufficiently insignificant to escape for the time.

Napoleon was kept in captivity but thirteen days. Salicetti apparently found it easier than he had supposed to exculpate himself from the charge either of participating in Robespierre's conspiracy or of having brought about the Corsican insurrection. More than this, he found himself firm in the good graces of the Thermidorians, among whom his old friends Barras and Fréron were held in high esteem. It would therefore be a simple thing to liberate General Buonaparte, if only a proper expression of opinion could be secured from him. The clever prisoner had it ready before it was needed. To the faithful Junot he wrote a kindly note declining to be rescued by a body of friends organized to storm the prison or scale its walls. Such a course would have compromised him further. But to the "representatives of the people" he wrote in language which finally committed him for life. He explained that in a revolutionary epoch there are but two classes of men, patriots and suspects. It could easily be seen to which class a man belonged who had fought both intestine and foreign foes. "I have sacrificed residence in my department, I have abandoned all my goods, I have lost all for the republic. Since then I have served at Toulon with some distinction, and I have deserved a share with the Army of Italy in the laurels it earned at the taking of Saorgio, Oneglia, and Tanaro. On the discovery of Robespierre's conspiracy my conduct was that of a man accustomed to regard nothing but principle." The letter concludes with a passionate appeal to each one separately and by name for justice and restoration. "An hour later, if the wicked want my life, I will gladly give it to them, I care so little for it, I

Chap. XVIII 1794 weary so often of it! Yes; the idea that it may be still useful to my country is all that makes me bear the burden with courage."

Salicetti in person went through the form of examining the papers offered in proof of Buonaparte's statements; found them, as a matter of course, satisfactory; and the commissioners restored the suppliant to partial liberty, but not to his post. He was to remain at army headquarters, and the still terrible Committee of Safety was to receive regular reports of his doings. This, too, was but a subterfuge. Commissioners from the Thermidorians arrived soon after with orders that for the present all offensive operations in Italy were to be suspended in order to put the strength of the district into a maritime expedition against Rome and ultimately against Corsica, which was now in the hands of England. Buonaparte immediately sought, and by Salicetti's favor obtained, the important charge of equipping and inspecting the artillery destined for the enterprise. He intended to make the venture tell in his personal interest against the English party now triumphant in his home. This was the middle of September. Before beginning to prepare for the Corsican expedition, the army made a final demonstration to secure its lines. It was during the preparatory days of this short campaign that a dreadful incident occurred. Buonaparte had long since learned the power of women, and had been ardently attentive in turn both to Charlotte Robespierre and to Mme. Ricord. "It was a great advantage to please them," he said; "for in a lawless time a representative of the people is a real power." Mme. Turreau, wife of one of the new commissioners, was now the ascendant star in his attentions. One day, while walking arm in arm with her near the top of the Tenda pass, Buonaparte took a sudden freak to show her what war was like, and ordered the advance-guard to charge the Austrian pickets. The attack was not only useless, but it endangered the safety of the army; yet it was made according to command, and human blood was shed. The story was told by Napoleon himself, at the close of his life, in a tone of repentance, but with evident relish.

Buonaparte was present at the ensuing victories, but only as a well-informed spectator and adviser, for he was yet in nominal disgrace. Within five days the enemies' lines were driven back so as to leave open the two most important roads into Italy—that by the valley of the Bormida to Alessandria, and that by the shore to Genoa. The difficult pass of Tenda fell entirely into French hands. The English could not disembark their troops to strengthen the Allies. The commerce of Genoa with Marseilles was reëstablished by land. "We have celebrated the fifth sansculottide of the year II (September twenty-first, 1794) in a manner worthy of the republic and the National Convention," wrote the commissioners to their colleagues in Paris. On the twenty-fourth, General Buonaparte was released by them from attendance at headquarters, thus becoming once again a free man and his own master. He proceeded immediately to Toulon in order to prepare for the Corsican expedition. Once more the power of a great nation was, he hoped, to be directed against the land of his birth, and he was an important agent in the plan.

To regain, if possible, some of his lost influence in the island, Buonaparte had already renewed communication with former acquaintances in Ajaccio. In a letter written immediately after his release in September, 1794, to the Corsican deputy Multedo, he informed his correspondent that his birthplace was the weakest spot on the island, and open to attack. The information was correct. Paoli had made an effort to strengthen it, but without success. "To drive the English," said the writer of the letter, "from a position which makes them masters of the Mediterranean, . . . to emancipate a large number of good patriots still to be found in that department, and to restore to their firesides the good republicans who have deserved the care of their country by the generous manner in which they have suffered for it, this, my friend, is the expedition which should occupy the attention of the government." Perhaps the old vista of becoming a Corsican hero opened up once again to a sore and disappointed man, but it is not probable: the horizon of his life had expanded too far to be again contracted, and the present task was probably considered but as a bridge to cross once more the waters of bitterness.

CHAPTER XIX

THE END OF APPRENTICESHIP

THE ENGLISH CONQUEST OF CORSICA—EFFECTS IN ITALY—THE BUONAPARTES AT TOULON—NAPOLEON THWARTED AGAIN—DEPARTURE FOR PARIS—HIS CHARACTER DETERMINED—HIS CAPACITIES—REACTION FROM THE "TERROR"—RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONVENTION—PARTIES IN FRANCE—THEIR LACK OF EXPERIENCE—A NEW CONSTITUTION—DIFFERENT VIEWS OF ITS VALUE.

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THE turmoils of civil war in France had now left Corsica to her pursuits for many months. Her internal affairs had gone from bad to worse, and Paoli, unable to control his people, had found himself helpless. Compelled to seek the support of some strong foreign power, he had instinctively turned to England, and the English fleet, driven from Toulon, was finally free to help him. On February seventeenth, 1794, it entered the fine harbor of St. Florent, and captured the town without an effort. Establishing a depot which thus separated the two remaining centers of French influence, Calvi and Bastia, the English admiral next laid siege to the latter. The place made a gallant defense, holding out for over three months, until on May twenty-fourth Captain Nelson, who had controlled operations for eighty-eight days,—nearly the entire time,—finally directed the guns of the *Agamemnon* with such destructive force against the little city that it surrendered. The terms made by its captors were the easiest known to modern warfare, the conquered being granted all the honors of war. As a direct and immediate result, the Corsican estates met, and declared the island a constitutional monarchy under the protection of England. Sir Gilbert Elliot was appointed viceroy, and Paoli was recalled by George III. to England. On August first fell Calvi, the last French stronghold in the country, hitherto considered impregnable by the Corsicans.

The presence of England so close to Italian shores immediately produced throughout Lombardy and Tuscany a reaction of feeling in favor of the French Revolution and its advanced ideas. The Committee of Safety meant to take advantage of this sentiment and punish Rome for an insult to the republic still unavenged—the death of the French minister, in 1793, at the hands of a mob; perhaps they might also drive the British from Corsica. This explained the arrival of the commissioners at Nice with the order to cease operations against Sardinia and Austria, for the purpose of striking at English influence in Italy, and possibly in Corsica.

Every thing but one was soon in readiness. To meet the English fleet, the shipwrights at Toulon must prepare a powerful squadron. They did not complete their gigantic task until February nineteenth, 1795. We can imagine the intense activity of any man of great power, determined to reconquer a lost position: what Buonaparte's fire and zeal must have been we can scarcely conceive; even his fiercest detractors bear witness to the activity of those months. When the order to embark was given, his organization and material were both as nearly perfect as possible. His mother had brought the younger children to a charming house near by, where she entertained the influential women of the neighborhood; and thither her busy son often withdrew for the pleasures of a society which he was now beginning thoroughly to enjoy. Thanks to the social diplomacy of this most ingenious family, everything went well for a time, even with Lucien; and Louis, now sixteen, was made a lieutenant of artillery. At the last moment came what seemed the climax of Napoleon's good fortune, the assurance that the destination of the fleet would be Corsica. Peace was made with Tuscany, Rome could not be reached without a decisive engagement with the English; therefore the first object of the expedition would be to engage the British squadron which was cruising about Corsica. Victory would of course mean entrance into Corsican harbors.

On March eleventh the new fleet set sail. Its very first encounter with the English ended in a disaster, and two of its fine ships were captured; the others fled to Hyères, where the troops were disembarked from their transports, and sent back to their posts. Once more Buonaparte was the victim of uncontrollable circumstance. Destitute of employment, stripped even of the little credit gained in the last half-year, he stood for the seventh time on the threshold of the world, a suppliant at the door. In some respects he was worse equipped for success than at the beginning, for he now had a record to expunge. To an outsider the spring of 1795 must have appeared the most critical period of his life. He himself knew better; in fact, this ill-fated expedition was probably soon forgotten altogether. In his St. Helena reminiscences, at least, he never recalled it: at that time he was not fond of mentioning his failures, little or great, being chiefly concerned to hand himself down to history as a man of lofty purposes and unsullied motives. Besides, he was never in the slightest degree responsible for the terrible waste of millions in this ill-starred maritime enterprise; all his own plans had been for the conduct of the war by land.

The Corsican administration had always had in it at least one French representative. Between the latest of these, Lacombe Saint Michel, now a member of the Committee of Safety, and the Salicetti party no love was ever lost. It was a general feeling that the refugee Corsicans on the Mediterranean shore were too near their home. They were always charged with unscrupulous planning to fill their own pockets. Now, somehow or other, inexplicably perhaps, but nevertheless certainly, a costly expedition had been sent to Corsica under the impulse of these very men, and it had failed. The unlucky adventurers had scarcely set their feet on shore before Lacombe secured Buonaparte's appointment to the Army of the West, where he would be far from old influences, with orders to proceed immediately to his post. The papers reached Marseilles, whither the Buonapartes had already betaken themselves, during the month of April. On May second, accompanied by Louis, Junot, and Marmont, the broken general set out for Paris, where he arrived with his companions eight days later, and rented shabby lodgings in the Fossés-Montmartre, now Aboukir street. The style of the house was Liberty Hotel.

At this point Buonaparte's apprentice years may be said to have ended: he was virtually the man he remained to the end. A Corsican by origin, he retained the national sensibility and an enormous power of endurance both physical and intellectual, together with the dogged persistence found in the medieval Corsicans. He was devoted with primitive virtue to his family and his people, but was willing to sacrifice the latter, at least, to his ambition. His moral sense, having never been developed by education, and, worse than that, having been befogged by the extreme sensibility of Rousseau and by the chaos of the times which that prophet had brought to pass, was practically lacking. Neither the hostility of his father to religion, nor his own experiences with the Jesuits, could, however, entirely eradicate a superstition which passed in his mind for faith. Sometimes he was a scoffer, as many with weak convictions are; but in general he preserved a formal and outward respect for the Church. He was, however, a stanch opponent of Roman centralization and papal pretensions. His theoretical education had been narrow and one-sided; but his reading and his authorship, in spite of their superficial and desultory character, had given him certain large and fairly definite conceptions of history and politics. But his practical education! What a polishing and sharpening he had had against the revolving world moving many times faster then than in most ages! He was an adept in the art of civil war, for he had been not merely an interested observer, but an active participant in it during five years in two countries. Long the victim of wiles more secret than his own, he had finally grown most wily in diplomacy; an ambitious politician, his pulpy principles were republican in their character so far as they had any tissue or firmness.

His acquisitions in the science of war were substantial and definite. Neither a martinet himself nor in any way tolerant of routine, ignorant in fact of many hateful details, among others of obedience, he yet rose far above tradition or practice in his conception of strategy. He was perceptibly superior to the world about him in almost every aptitude, and particularly so in power of combination, in originality, and in farsightedness. He could neither write nor spell correctly, but he was skilled in all practical applications of mathematics: town and country, mountains and plains, seas and rivers, were all quantities in his equations. Untrustworthy himself, he strove to arouse trust, faith, and devotion in those about him; and concealing successfully his own purpose, he read the hearts of others like an open book. Of pure-minded affection for either men or women he had so far shown only a little, and had experienced in return even less; but he had studied the arts of gallantry, and understood the leverage of social forces. To these capacities, some embryonic, some perfectly formed, add the fact that he was now a cosmopolitan, and there will be outline, relief, and color to his character. "I am in that frame of mind," he said of himself about this time, "in which men are when on the eve of battle, with a persistent conviction that since death is imminent in the end, to be uneasy is folly.

Everything makes me brave death and destiny; and if this goes on, I shall in the end, my friend, no longer turn when a carriage passes. My reason is sometimes astonished at all this; but it is the effect produced on me by the moral spectacle of this land [*ce pays-ci*, not *patrie*], and by the habit of running risks." This is the power and the temper of a man of whom an intimate and confidential friend predicted that he would never stop short until he had mounted either the throne or the scaffold.

The overthrow of Robespierre was the result of an alliance between what may be called the radicals and the conservatives in the Convention. Both were Jacobins, for the Girondists had been discredited, and put out of doors. It was not, however, the Convention, but Paris, which took command of the resulting movement. The social structure of France has been so strong, and the nation so homogeneous, that political convulsions have had much less influence there than elsewhere. But the "Terror" had struck at the heart of nearly every family of consequence in the capital, and the people were utterly weary of horrors. The wave of reaction began when the would-be dictator fell. A wholesome longing for safety, with its attendant pleasures, overpowered society, and light-heartedness returned. Underneath this temper lay but partly concealed a grim determination not to be thwarted, which awed the Convention. Slowly, yet surely, the Jacobins lost their power. As once the whole land had been mastered by the idea of "federation," and as a later patriotic impulse had given as a watchword "the nation," so now another refrain was in every mouth—"humanity." The very songs of previous stages, the "Ça ira" and the "Carmagnole," were displaced by new and milder ones. With Paris in this mood, it was clear that the proscribed might return, and the Convention, for its intemperate severity, must abdicate.

This, of course, meant a new political experiment; but being, as they were, sanguine admirers of Rousseau, the French felt no apprehension at the prospect. The present constitution of the third republic in France is considered a happy chance by many who live under it. It is far from being perfectly adapted to the needs of the nation; but what fine qualities it possesses are the outcome, not of chance, nor of theory, but of a century's experience. It should be remembered that France in the eighteenth century had had no experience whatever of constitutional government, and the spirit of the age was all for theory in politics. Accordingly the democratic monarchy of 1791 had failed because, its framework having been built of empty visions, its constitution was entirely in the air. The same fate had now overtaken the Girondist experiment of 1792 and the Jacobin usurpation of the following year, which was ostensibly sanctioned by the popular adoption of a new constitution. With perfect confidence in Rousseau's idea that government is based on a social contract between individuals, the nation had sworn its adhesion to two constitutions successively, and had ratified the act each time by appropriate solemnities. Already the flimsy bubble of such a conception had been punctured. Was it strange that the Convention determined to repeat the same old experiment? Not at all. They knew nothing better than the old idea, and never doubted that the fault lay, not in the system, but in its details; they believed they could improve on the work of their predecessors by the change and modification of particulars. Aware, therefore, that their own day had passed, they determined, before dissolving, to construct a new and improved form of government. The work was confided to a committee of eleven, most of whom were Girondists recalled for the purpose in order to hoodwink the public. They now separated the executive and judiciary from each other and from the legislature, divided the latter into two branches, so as to cool the heat of popular sentiment before it was expressed in statutes, and, avoiding the pitfall dug for itself by the National Assembly, made members of the Convention eligible for election under the new system.

If the monarchy could have been restored at the same time, these features of the new charter would have reproduced in France some elements of the British constitution, and its adoption would probably have pacified the dynastic rulers of Europe. But the restoration of monarchy in any form was as yet impossible. The Bourbons had utterly discredited royalty, and the late glorious successes had been won partly by the lavish use in the enemy's camp of money raised and granted by radical democrats, partly by the prowess of enthusiastic republicans. The compact, efficient organization of the national army was the work of the Jacobins, and while the Mountain was discredited in Paris, it was not so in the provinces; moreover, the army which was on foot and in the field was in the main a Jacobin army. Royalty was so hated by most Frenchmen that the sad plight of the child dauphin, dying by inches in the Temple, awakened no compassion, and its next lineal representative was that hated thing, a voluntary exile; the nobility, who might have furnished the material for a French House of Lords, were traitors to their country, actually bearing arms in the levies of her foes. The national feeling was a passion; Louis XVI. had been popular enough until he had outraged it first by ordering the Church to remain obedient to Rome, and then by appealing to foreign powers for protection. The emigrant nobles had stumbled over one another in their haste to manifest their contempt for nationality by throwing themselves into the arms of their own class in foreign lands. Moreover, the work of the Revolution in another direction could not be undone. The lands of both the emigrants and the Church had either been seized and divided among the adherents of the new order, or else appropriated to state uses. Restitution was out of the question, for the power of the new owners was sufficient to destroy any one who should propose to take away their possessions. A constitutional monarchy, therefore, was unthinkable. A presidential government on the model of that devised and used by the United States was equally impossible, because the French appear already to have had a premonition or an instinct that a ripe experience of liberty was essential to the working of such an institution. The student of the revolutionary times will become aware how powerful the feeling already was among the French, that a single strong executive, elected by the masses, would speedily turn into a tyrant. They have now a nominal president; but his election is indirect, his office is representative, not political, and his duties are like an impersonal, colorless reflection of those performed by the English crown. The constitution-makers simply could not fall back on an experience of successful free government which did not exist. Absolute monarchy had made gradual change impossible, for oppression dies only in convulsions. Experience was in front, not behind, and must be gained through suffering.

It was therefore a sad necessity which led the Thermidorians of the Convention to try another political nostrum. What should it be? There had always been a profound sense in France of her historic continuity with Rome. Her system of jurisprudence, her speech, her church, her very land, were Roman. Recalling this, the constitution-framers also recollected that these had been the gifts of imperial Rome. It was a curious but characteristic whim which consequently suggested the revival of Roman forms dating from the commonwealth. This it was which led them to commit the administration of government in both external and internal relations to a divided executive. There, however, the resemblance to Rome ended, for instead of two consuls there were to be five directors. These were to sit as a committee, to appoint their own ministerial agents, together with all officers and officials of the army, and to fill the few positions in the administrative departments which were not elective, except those in the treasury, which was a separate, independent administration. All executive powers except those of the treasury were likewise to be in their hands. They were to have no veto, and their treaties of peace must be ratified by the legislature; but they could declare war without consulting any one. The judiciary was to be elected directly by the people, and the judges were to hold office for about a year. The legislature was to be separated into a senate with two hundred and fifty members, called the Council of Ancients, which had the veto power, and an assembly called the Council of Juniors, or, more popularly, from its number, the Five Hundred, which had the initiative in legislation. The members of the former must be at least forty years old and married; every aspirant for a seat in the latter must be twenty-five and of good character. Both these bodies were alike to be elected by universal suffrage working indirectly through secondary electors, and limited by educational and property qualifications. There were many wholesome checks and balances.

The scheme was formed, as was intended, under Girondist influence, and was acceptable to the nation as a whole. In spite of many defects, it might after a little experience have been amended so as to work, if the people had been united and hearty in its support. But they were not. The Thermidorians, who were still Jacobins at heart, ordered that at least two thirds of the men elected to sit in the new houses should have been members of the Convention, on the plea that they alone had sufficient experience of affairs to carry on the public business, at least for the present. Perhaps this was intended as some offset to the closing of the Jacobin Club on November twelfth, 1794, before the menaces of the higher classes of Parisian society, known to history as "the gilded youth." On the other hand, the royalists saw in the new constitution an instrument ready to their hand, should public opinion, in its search for means to restore quiet and order, be carried still further away from the Revolution than the movement of Thermidor had swept it. Their conduct justified the measures of the Jacobins.

CHAPTER XX

THE ANTECHAMBER TO SUCCESS

Punishment of the Terrorists—Dangers of the Thermidorians—Successes of Republican Arms—The Treaty of Basel—Vendean Disorders Repressed—The "White Terror"—Royalist Activity—Friction under the New Constitution—Arrival of Bonaparte in Paris—Paris Society—Its Power—The People Angry—Resurgence of Jacobinism—Bonaparte's Dejection—His Relations with Mme. Permon—His Magnanimity.

FROM time to time after the events of Thermidor the more active agents of the Terror were sentenced to transportation, and the less guilty were imprisoned. On May seventh, 1795, three days before Buonaparte's arrival in Paris, Fouquier-Tinville, and fifteen other wretches who had been but tools, the executioners of the revolutionary tribunal, were put to death. The National Guard had been reorganized, and Pichegru was recalled from the north to take command of the united forces in Paris under a committee of the Convention with Barras at its head.

This was intended to overawe those citizens of Paris who were hostile to the Jacobins. They saw the trap set for them, and were angry. During the years of internal disorder and foreign warfare just passed the economic conditions of the land had grown worse and worse, until, in the winter of 1794–95, the laboring classes of Paris were again on the verge of starvation. As usual, they attributed their sufferings to the government, and there were bread riots. Twice in the spring of 1795—on April first and May twentieth—the unemployed and hungry rose to overthrow the Convention, but they were easily put down by the soldiers on both occasions. The whole populace, as represented by the sections of Paris, resented this use of armed force, and grew uneasy. The Thermidorians further angered it by introducing a new metropolitan administration, which greatly diminished the powers and influence of the sections, without, however, destroying their organization. The people of the capital, therefore, were ready for mischief. The storming of the Tuileries on August tenth, 1792, had been the work of the Paris mob. Why could they not overthrow the tyranny of the Jacobins as they had that of the King?

A crisis might easily have been precipitated before Buonaparte's arrival in Paris, but it was delayed by events outside the city. The year 1794 had been a brilliant season for the republican arms and for republican diplomacy. Pichegru, with the Army of the North, had driven the invaders from French soil and had conquered the Austrian Netherlands. Jourdan, with the Army of the Sambre and Meuse, had defeated the Austrians at Fleurus in a battle decided by the bravery of Marceau, thus confirming the conquest. Other generals were likewise rising to eminence. Hoche had in 1793 beaten the Austrians under Wurmser at Weissenburg, and driven them from Alsace. He had now further heightened his fame by his successes against the insurgents of the West. Saint-Cyr, Bernadotte, and Kléber, with many others of Buonaparte's contemporaries, had also risen to distinction in minor engagements. The record of military energy put forth by the liberated nation under Jacobin rule stands, as Fox declared in the House of Commons, absolutely unique. Twenty-seven victories, eight in pitched battle; one hundred and twenty fights; ninety thousand prisoners; one hundred and sixteen towns and important places captured; two hundred and thirty forts or redoubts taken; three thousand eight hundred pieces of ordnance, seventy thousand muskets, one thousand tons of powder, and ninety standards fallen into French hands—such is the incredible tale. Moreover, the army had been purged with as little mercy as a mercantile corporation shows to incompetent employees. It is often claimed that the armies of republican France and of Napoleon were, after all, the armies of the Bourbons. Not so. The conscription law, though very imperfect in itself, was supplemented by the general enthusiasm; a nation was now in the ranks instead of hirelings; the reorganization had remodeled the whole structure, and between January first, 1792, and January twentieth, 1795, one hundred and ten division commanders, two hundred and sixty-three generals of brigade, and one hundred and thirty-eight adjutant-generals either resigned, were suspended from duty, or were dismissed from the service. The republic had new leaders and new men in its armies.

The nation had apparently determined that the natural boundary of France and of its own revolutionary system was the Rhine. Nice and Savoy would round out their territory to the south. This much the new government, it was understood, would conquer, administer, and keep; the Revolution in other lands, impelled but not guided by French influence, must manage its own affairs. This was, of course, an entirely new diplomatic situation. Under its pressure Holland, by the aid of Pichegru's army, became the Batavian Republic, and ceded Dutch Flanders to France; while Prussia abandoned the coalition, and in the treaty of Basel, signed on April fifth, 1795, agreed to the neutrality of all north Germany, and in return for the possessions of the ecclesiastical princes in central Germany, which were eventually to be secularized, yielded to France undisputed possession of the left bank of the Rhine. Spain, Portugal, and the little states both of south Germany and of Italy were all alike weary of the contest, the more so as they were honeycombed with liberal ideas. They were already preparing to desert England and Austria, the great powers which still stood firm, and, with the exception of Portugal, they acceded within a few weeks to the terms of Basel. Rome, as the instigator of the unyielding ecclesiastics of Vendée, was, of course, on the side of Great Britain and the Empire.

At home the military success of the republic was for a little while equally marked. Before the close of 1794 the Breton peasants who, under the name of Chouans, had become lawless highwaymen were entirely crushed; and the English expedition sent to Quiberon in the following year to revive the disorders was a fizzle. The insurrection of Vendée had dragged stubbornly on, but it was stamped out in June, 1795, by the execution of over seven hundred of the emigrants who had returned on English vessels to fan the royalist blaze which was kindling again.

The royalists, having created the panic of five years previous, were not now to be outdone even by the Terror. Charette, the Vendean leader, retaliated by a holocaust of two thousand republican prisoners whom he had taken. After the events of Thermidor the Convention had thrown open the prison doors, put an end to bloodshed, and proclaimed an amnesty. The evident power of the Parisian burghers, the form given by the Girondists to the new constitution, the longing of all for peace and for a return of comfort and prosperity, still further emboldened the royalists, and enabled them to produce a widespread revulsion of feeling. They rose in many parts of the South, instituting what is known from the colors they wore as the "White Terror," and pitilessly murdering, in the desperation of timid revenge, their unsuspecting and unready neighbors of republican opinions. The scenes enacted were more terrible, the human butchery was more bloody, than any known during the darkest days of the revolutionary movement in Paris.

The Jacobins, therefore, in view of so dangerous a situation, and not without some reason, had determined that they themselves should administer the new constitution. The royalists at the same time saw in its provisions a means to accomplish their ends; and relying upon the attitude of the capital, in which mob and burghers alike were angry, determined simultaneously to strike a blow for mastery, and to supplant the Jacobins. Evidence of their activity appeared both in military and political circles. Throughout the summer of 1795 there was an unaccountable languor in the army. It was believed that Pichegru had purposely palsied his own and Jourdan's abilities, and the needless armistice he made with Austria went far to confirm the idea. It was afterward proved that several members of the Convention had been in communication with royalists. Among their agents was a personage of some importance—a certain Aubry—who, having returned after the events of Thermidor, never disavowed his real sentiments as a royalist; and being later made chairman of the army committee, was in that position when Buonaparte's career was temporarily checked by degradation from the artillery to the infantry. For this absurd reason he was long but unjustly thought to have also caused the original transfer to the West.

The Convention was vaguely aware of all that was taking place. Having abolished the powerful and terrible Committee of Safety, which had conducted its operations with such success as attends remorseless vigor, it was found necessary on August ninth to reconstruct something similar to meet the new crisis. At the same time the spirit of the hour was propitiated by forming sixteen other committees to control the action of the central one. Such a dispersion of executive power was a virtual paralysis of action. The constitution was adopted a fortnight later, on August twenty-second. Immediately the sections of Paris began to display irritation at the limitations set to their choice of new representatives. They had many sympathizers in the provinces, and the extreme reactionaries from the Revolution were jubilant. Fortunately for France, Carnot was temporarily retained to control the department of war. He was not removed until the following March.

When General Buonaparte reached Paris, and went to dwell in the mean and shabby lodgings which his lean purse compelled him to choose, he found the city strangely metamorphosed. Animated by a settled purpose not to accept the position assigned to him in the Army of the West, and, if necessary, to defy his military superiors, his humor put him out of all sympathy with the prevalent gaiety. Bitter experience had taught him that in civil war the consequences of victory and defeat are alike inglorious. In the fickleness of public opinion the avenging hero of to-day may easily become the reprobated outcast of to-morrow. What reputation he had gained at Toulon was already dissipated in part; the rest might easily be squandered entirely in Vendée. He felt and said that he could wait. But how about his daily bread?

The drawing-rooms of Paris had opened like magic before the "sesame" of Thermidor and the prospects of settled order under the Directory. There were visiting, dining, and dancing; dressing, flirtation, and intrigue; walking, driving, and riding—all the avocations of a people soured with the cruel and bloody past, and reasserting its native passion for pleasure and refinement. The morality of the hour was no better than the old; for there was a strange mixture of elements in this new society; the men in power were of every class—a few of the old aristocracy, many of the wealthy burghers, a certain proportion of the colonial nabobs from the West Indies and elsewhere, adventurers of every stripe, a few even of the city populace, and some country common folk. The ingredients of this queer hodgepodge had yet to learn one another's language and nature; the niceties of speech, gesture, and mien which once had a well-understood significance in government circles were all to be readjusted in accordance with the ideas of the motley crowd and given new conventional currency. In such a disorderly transition vice does not require the mask of hypocrisy, virtue is helpless because unorganized, and something like riot characterizes conduct. The sound and rugged goodness of many newcomers, the habitual respectability of the veterans, were for the moment alike inactive because not yet kneaded into the lump they had to leaven.

There was, nevertheless, a marvelous exhibition of social power in this heterogeneous mass: nothing of course proportionate in extent to what had been brought forth for national defense, but still of almost, if not entirely, equal significance. Throughout the revolutionary epoch there had been much discussion concerning reforms in education. It was in 1794 that Monge finally succeeded in founding the great Polytechnic School, an institution which clearly corresponded to a national characteristic, since from that day it has strengthened the natural bias of the French toward applied science, and tempted them to the undue and unfortunate neglect of many important humanizing disciplines. The Conservatory of Music and the Institute were permanently reorganized soon after. The great collections of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers) were begun, and permanent lecture courses were founded in connection with the National Library, the Botanical Garden, the Medical School, and other learned institutions. Almost immediately a philosophical literature began to appear; pictures were painted, and the theaters reopened with new and tolerable pieces written for the day and place. In the very midst of war, moreover, an attempt was made to emancipate the press. The effort was ill advised, and the results were so deplorable for the conduct of affairs that the newspapers were in the event more firmly muzzled than ever.

When Buonaparte had made his living arrangements, and began to look about, he must have been stupefied by the hatred of the Convention so generally and openly manifested on every side. The provinces had looked upon the Revolution as accomplished. Paris was evidently in such ill humor with the body which represented it that the republic was to all appearance virtually undone. "Reëlect two thirds of the Convention members to the new legislature!" said the angry demagogues of the Paris sections. "Never! Those men who, by their own confession, have for three years in all these horrors been the cowardly tools of a sentiment they could not restrain, but are now self-styled and reformed moderates! Impossible!" Whether bribed by foreign gold, and working under the influence of royalists, or by reason of the famine, or through the determination of the well-to-do to have a radical change, or from all these influences combined, the sections were gradually organizing for resistance, and it was soon

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clear that the National Guard was in sympathy with them. The Convention was equally alert, and began to arm for the conflict. They already had several hundred artillerymen and five thousand regulars who were imbued with the national rather than the local spirit; they now began to enlist a special guard of fifteen hundred from the desperate men who had been the trusty followers of Hébert and Robespierre.

For a month or more Buonaparte was a mere onlooker, or at most an interested examiner of events, weighing and speculating in obscurity much as he had done three years before. The war department listened to and granted his earnest request that he might remain in Paris until a general reassignment of officers, which had been determined upon, and, as his good fortune would have it, was already in progress, should be completed. As the first weeks passed, news arrived from the south of a reaction in favor of the Jacobins. It became clearer every day that the Convention had moral support beyond the ramparts of Paris, and within the city it was possible to maintain something in the nature of a Jacobin salon. Many of that faith who were disaffected with the new conditions in Paris—the Corsicans in particular—were welcomed at the home of Mme. Permon by herself and her beautiful daughter, afterward Mme. Junot and Duchess of Abrantès. Salicetti had chosen the other child, a son now grown, as his private secretary, and was of course a special favorite in the house. The first manifestation of reviving Jacobin confidence was shown in the attack made on May twentieth upon the Convention by hungry rioters who shouted for the constitution of 1793, and were assisted in creating disorder by the radical members. The tumult was quelled by the courage and presence of mind shown by Boissy d'Anglas, a calm and determined moderate, who had been commissioned to act alone in provisioning Paris, and bravely accepted his responsibility by mounting the president's chair in the midst of the tumult. The mob brandished in his face the bloody head of Féraud, a fellow-member of his whom they had just murdered. The chairman uncovered his head in respect, and his undaunted mien cowed the leaders, who slunk away, followed by the rabble. The consequence was a total annihilation of the Mountain on May twenty-second. The Convention committees were disbanded, their artillerymen were temporarily dismissed, and the constitution of 1793 was abolished.

The friendly home of Mme. Permon was almost the only resort of

Buonaparte, who, though disillusioned, was still a Jacobin. Something like desperation appeared in his manner; the lack of proper food emaciated his frame, while uncertainty as to the future left its mark on his wan face and in his restless eyes. It was not astonishing, for his personal and family affairs were apparently hopeless. His brothers, like himself, had now been deprived of profitable employment; they, with him, might possibly and even probably soon be numbered among the suspects; destitute of a powerful patron, and with his family once more in actual want, Napoleon was scarcely fit in either garb or humor for the society even of his friends. His hostess described him as having "sharp, angular features; small hands, long and thin; his hair long and disheveled; without gloves; wearing badly made, badly polished shoes; having always a sickly appearance, which was the result of his lean and yellow complexion, brightened only by two eyes glistening with shrewdness and firmness." Bourrienne, who had now returned from diplomatic service, was not edified by the appearance or temper of his acquaintance, who, he says, "was ill clad and slovenly, his character cold, often inscrutable. His smile was hollow and often out of place. He had moments of fierce gaiety which made you uneasy, and indisposed to love him."

No wonder the man was ill at ease. His worst fears were realized when the influence of the Mountain was wiped out,— Carnot, the organizer of victory, as he had been styled, being the only one of all the old leaders to escape. Salicetti was too prominent a partizan to be overlooked by the angry burghers. For a time he was concealed by Mme. Permon in her Paris home. He escaped the vengeance of his enemies in the disguise of her lackey, flying with her when she left for the south to seek refuge for herself and children. Even the rank and file among the members of the Mountain either fled or were arrested. That Buonaparte was unmolested appears to prove how cleverly he had concealed his connection with them. The story that in these days he proposed for the hand of Mme. Permon, though without any corroborative evidence, has an air of probability, partly in the consideration of a despair which might lead him to seek any support, even that of a wife as old as his mother, partly from the existence of a letter to the lady which, though enigmatical, displays an interesting mixture of wounded pride and real or pretended jealousy. The epistle is dated June eighteenth, 1795. He felt that she would think him duped, he explains, if he did not inform her that although she had not seen fit to give her confidence to him, he had all along known that she had Salicetti in hiding. Then follows an address to that countryman, evidently intended to clear the writer from all taint of Jacobinism, and couched in these terms: "I could have denounced thee, but did not, although it would have been but a just revenge so to do. Which has chosen the truer part? Go, seek in peace an asylum where thou canst return to better thoughts of thy country. My lips shall never utter thy name. Repent, and above all, appreciate my motives. This I deserve, for they are noble and generous." In these words to the political refugee he employs the familiar republican "thou"; in the peroration, addressed, like the introduction, to the lady herself, he recurs to the polite and distant "you." "Mme. Permon, my good wishes go with you as with your child. You are two feeble creatures with no defense. May Providence and the prayers of a friend be with you. Above all, be prudent and never remain in the large cities. Adieu. Accept my friendly greetings."

The meaning of this missive is recondite; perhaps it is this: Mme. Permon, I loved you, and could have ruined the rival who is your protégé with a clear conscience, for he once did me foul wrong, as he will acknowledge. But farewell. I bear you no grudge. Or else it may announce another change in the political weather by the veering of the cock. As a good citizen, despising the horrors of the past, I could have denounced you, Salicetti. I did not, for I recalled old times and your helplessness, and wished to heap coals of fire on your head, that you might see the error of your way. The latter interpretation finds support in the complete renunciation of Jacobinism which the writer made soon afterward, and in his subsequent labored explanation that in the "Supper of Beaucaire" he had not identified himself with the Jacobin soldier, but had wished only by a dispassionate presentation of facts to show the hopeless case of Marseilles, and to prevent useless bloodshed.

CHAPTER XXI

BONAPARTE THE GENERAL OF THE CONVENTION

DISAPPOINTMENTS—ANOTHER FURLOUGH—CONNECTION WITH BARRAS—OFFICIAL SOCIETY IN PARIS—BONAPARTE AS A BEAU—CONDITION OF HIS FAMILY—A POLITICAL GENERAL—AN OPENING IN TURKEY—OPPORTUNITIES IN EUROPE—SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT—OFFICIAL DEGRADATION—SCHEMES FOR RESTORATION—PLANS OF THE ROYALISTS—THE HOSTILITY OF PARIS TO THE CONVENTION—BONAPARTE, GENERAL OF THE CONVENTION TROOPS—HIS STRATEGY.

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THE overhauling of the army list with the subsequent reassignment of officers turned out ill for Buonaparte. Aubry, the head of the committee, appears to have been utterly indifferent to him, displaying no ill will, and certainly no active good will, toward the sometime Jacobin, whose name, moreover, was last on the list of artillery officers in the order of seniority. According to the regulations, when one arm of the service was overmanned, the superfluous officers were to be transferred to another. This was now the case with the artillery, and Buonaparte, as a supernumerary, was on June thirteenth again ordered to the West, but this time only as a mere infantry general of brigade. He appears to have felt throughout life more vindictiveness toward Aubry, the man whom he believed to have been the author of this particular misfortune, than toward any other person with whom he ever came in contact. In this rigid scrutiny of the army list, exaggerated pretensions of service and untruthful testimonials were no longer accepted. For this reason Joseph also had already lost his position, and was about to settle with his family in Genoa, while Louis was actually sent back to school, being ordered to Châlons. Poor Lucien, overwhelmed in the general ruin of the radicals, and with a wife and child dependent on him, was in despair. The other members of the family were temporarily destitute, but self-helpful.

In this there was nothing new; but, for all that, the monotony of the situation must have been disheartening. Napoleon's resolution was soon taken. He was either really ill from privation and disappointment, or soon became so. Armed with a medical certificate, he applied for and received a furlough. This step having been taken, the next, according to the unchanged and familiar instincts of the man, was to apply under the law for mileage to pay his expenses on the journey which he had taken as far as Paris in pursuance of the order given him on March twenty-ninth to proceed to his post in the West. Again, following the precedents of his life, he calculated mileage not from Marseilles, whence he had really started, but from Nice, thus largely increasing the amount which he asked for, and in due time received. During his leave several projects occupied his busy brain. The most important were a speculation in the sequestered lands of the emigrants and monasteries, and the writing of two monographs—one a history of events from the ninth of Fructidor, year II (August twenty-sixth, 1794), to the beginning of year IV (September twenty-third, 1795), the other a memoir on the Army of Italy. The first notion was doubtless due to a frenzy for speculation, then rife, which was comparable only to that which prevailed in France at the time of Law's Mississippi scheme or in England during the South Sea Bubble. It affords an insight into financial conditions to know that a gold piece of twenty francs was worth seven hundred and fifty in paper. A project for purchasing a certain property as a good investment for his wife's dowry was submitted to Joseph, but it failed by the sudden repeal of the law under which such purchases were made. The two themes were both finished, and another, "A Study in Politics: being an Inquiry into the Causes of Troubles and Discords," was sketched, but never completed. The memoir on the Army of Italy was virtually the scheme for offensive warfare which he had laid before the younger Robespierre; it was now revised, and sent to the highest military power—the new central committee appointed as a substitute for the Committee of Safety. These occupations were all very well, but the furlough was rapidly expiring, and nothing had turned up. Most opportunely, the invalid had a relapse, and was able to secure an extension of leave until August fourth, the date on which a third of the committee on the reassignment of officers would retire, among them the hated Aubry.

Speaking at St. Helena of these days, he said: "I lived in the Paris streets without employment. I had no social habits, going only into the set at the house of Barras, where I was well received. . . . I was there because there was nothing to be had elsewhere. I attached myself to Barras because I knew no one else. Robespierre was dead; Barras was playing a rôle: I had to attach myself to somebody and something."

It will not be forgotten that Barras and Fréron had been Dantonists when they were at the siege of Toulon with Buonaparte. After the events of Thermidor they had forsworn Jacobinism altogether, and were at present in alliance with the moderate elements of Paris society. Barras's rooms in the Luxembourg were the center of all that was gay and dazzling in that corrupt and careless world. They were, as a matter of course, the resort of the most beautiful and brilliant women, influential, but not over-scrupulous. Mme. Tallien, who has been called "the goddess of Thermidor," was the queen of the coterie; scarcely less beautiful and gracious were the widow Beauharnais and Mme. Récamier. Barras had been a noble; the instincts of his class made him a delightful host.

What Napoleon saw and experienced he wrote to the faithful Joseph. The letters are a truthful transcript of his emotions, the key-note of which is admiration for the Paris women. "Carriages and the gay world appear, or rather suggest as after a long dream that they have ever ceased to glitter. Readings, lecture courses in history, botany, astronomy, etc., follow one another. Everything is here collected to amuse and render life agreeable; you are taken out of your thoughts; how can you have the blues in this intensity of purpose and whirling turmoil? The women are everywhere, at the play, on the promenades, in the libraries. In the scholar's study you find very charming persons. Here only of all places in the world they deserve to hold the helm: the men are mad about them, think only of them, and live only by means of their influence. A woman needs six months in Paris to know what is her due and what is her sphere." As yet he had not met Mme. Beauharnais. The whole tone of the correspondence is cheerful, and indicates that Buonaparte's efforts for a new alliance had been successful, that his fortunes were looking up, and that the giddy world contained something of uncommon interest. As his fortunes improved, he grew more hopeful, and appeared more in society. On occasion he even ventured upon little gallantries. Presented to Mme. Tallien, he was frequently seen at her receptions. He was at first shy and reserved, but time and custom put him more at his ease. One evening, as little groups were gradually formed for the interchange of jest and repartee, he seemed to lose his timidity altogether, and, assuming the mien of a fortune-teller, caught his hostess's hand, and poured out a long rigmarole of nonsense which much amused the rest of the circle.

These months had also improved the situation of the family. His mother and younger sisters were somehow more comfortable in their Marseilles home. Strange doings were afterward charged against them, but it is probable that these stories are without other foundation than spite. Napoleon had received a considerable sum for mileage, nearly twenty-seven hundred francs, and, good son as he always was, it is likely that he shared the money with his family. Both Elisa and the little Pauline now had suitors. Fesch, described by Lucien as "ever fresh, not like a rose, but like a good radish," was comfortably waiting at Aix in the house of old acquaintances for a chance to return to Corsica. Joseph's arrangements for moving to Genoa were nearly complete, and Louis was comfortably settled at school in Châlons. "Brutus" Lucien was the only luckless wight of the number: his fears had been realized, and, having been denounced as a Jacobin, he was now lying terror-stricken in the prison of Aix, when all about him men of his stripe were being executed.

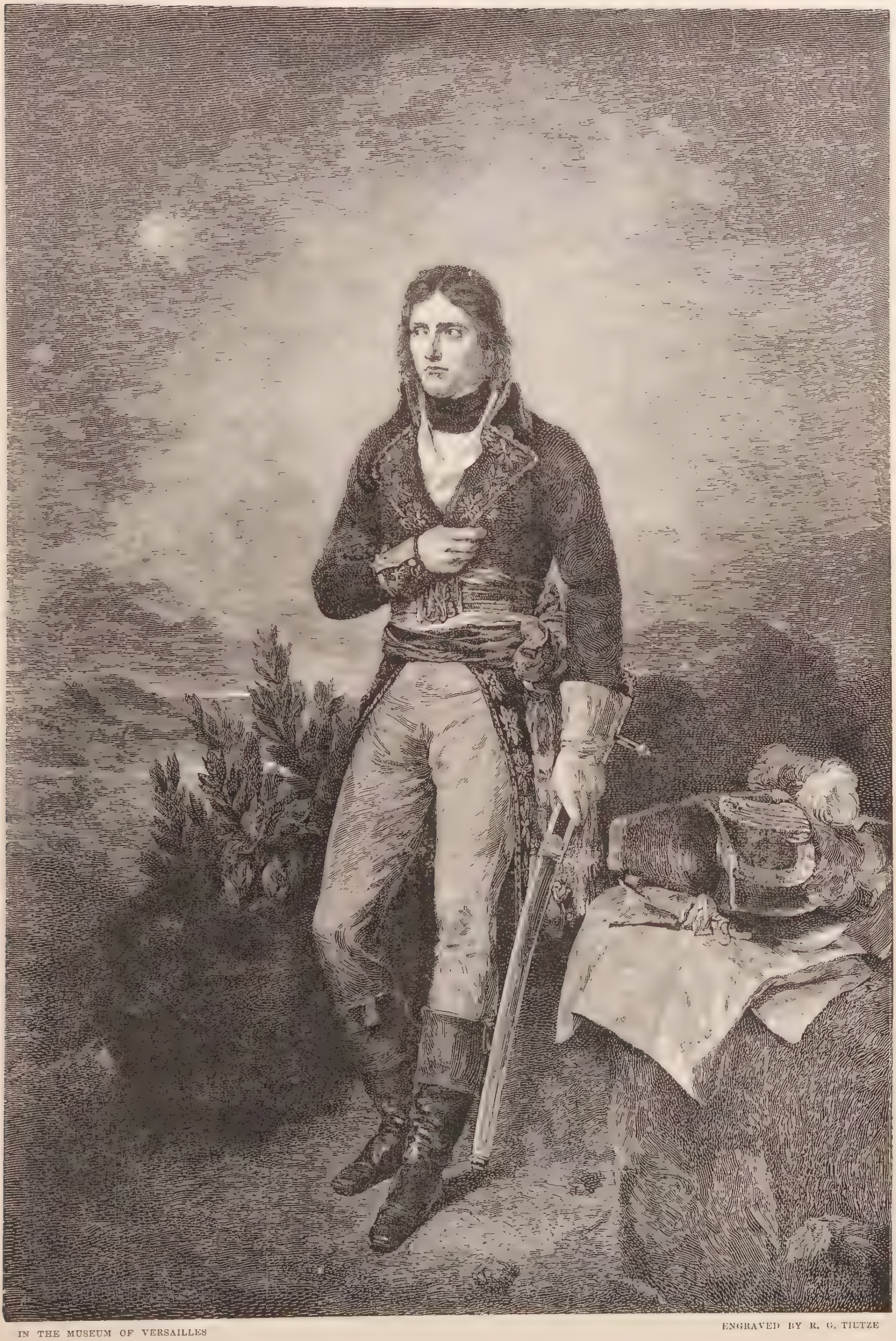
On August fifth the members of the new Committee of Safety finally entered on their duties. Almost the first document presented at the meeting was Buonaparte's demand for restoration to his rank in the artillery. It rings with indignation, and abounds with loose statements about his past services, boldly claiming the honors of the last short but successful Italian campaign. The paper was referred to the proper authorities, and, a fortnight later, its writer received peremptory orders to join his corps in the West. What could be more amusingly characteristic of this persistent man than to read, in a letter to Joseph under date of the following day, August twentieth: "I am attached at this moment to the topographical bureau of the Committee of Safety for the direction of the armies in Carnot's place. If I wish, I can be sent to Turkey by the government as general of artillery, with a good salary and a splendid title, to organize the artillery of the Grand Turk." Then follow plans for Joseph's appointment to the consular service, for a meeting at Leghorn, and for a further land speculation. At the close are these remarks, which not only exhibit great acuteness of observation, but are noteworthy as displaying a permanent quality of the man, that of always having an alternative in readiness: "It is quiet, but storms are gathering, perhaps; the primaries are going to meet in a few days. I shall take with me five or six officers. . . . The commission and decree of the Committee of Safety, which employs me in the duty of directing the armies and plans of campaign, being most flattering to me, I fear they will no longer allow me to go to Turkey. We shall see. I may have on hand a campaign to-day. . . . Write always as if I were going to Turkey."

This was all half true. By dint of soliciting Barras and Doulcet de Pontécoulant, another well-wisher, both men of influence, and by importuning Fréron, then at the height of his power, but soon to display a ruinous incapacity, Buonaparte had actually been made a member of the commission of four which directed the armies, and Dutot had been sent in his stead to the West. Moreover, there was likewise a chance for realizing those dreams of achieving glory in the Orient which had haunted him from childhood. At this moment there was a serious tension in the politics of eastern Europe, and the French saw an opportunity to strike Austria on the other side by an alliance with Turkey. The latter country was of course entirely unprepared for war, and asked for the appointment of a French commission to reconstruct its gunfoundries and to improve its artillery service. Buonaparte, having learned the fact, had immediately prepared two memorials, one on the Turkish artillery, and another on the means of strengthening Turkish power against the encroachments of European monarchies. These he sent up with an application that he should be appointed head of the commission, inclosing also laudatory certificates of his uncommon ability from Doulcet and from Debry, a newly made friend.

But the vista of an Eastern career temporarily vanished. The new constitution, adopted, as already stated, on August twenty-second, could not become operative until after the elections. On August thirty-first Buonaparte's plan for the conduct of the coming Italian campaign was read by the Convention committee, found satisfactory, and adopted. It remains in many respects the greatest of all Napoleon's military papers, its only fault being that no genius inferior to his own could carry it out. A few days later he became aware of the impression he had made: it seemed clear that he had a reality in hand worth every possibility in the Orient. He therefore wrote to Joseph that he was going to remain in Paris, explaining, as if incidentally, that he could thus be on the lookout for any desirable vacancy in the consular service, and secure it, if possible, for him.

Dreams of another kind had supplanted in his mind all visions of Oriental splendor; for in subsequent letters to the same correspondent, written almost daily, he unfolds a series of rather startling schemes, which among other things include a marriage, a town house, and a country residence, with a cabriolet and three horses. How all this was to come about we cannot entirely discover. The marriage plan is clearly stated. Joseph had wedded one of the daughters of a comparatively wealthy merchant. He was requested to sound his brother-in-law concerning the other, the famous Désirée Clary, who afterward became Mme. Bernadotte. Two of the horses were to be supplied by the government in place of a pair which he might be supposed to have possessed at Nice in accordance with the rank he then held, and to have sold, according to orders, when sent on the maritime expedition to Corsica. Where the third horse and the money for the houses were to come from is inscrutable; but, as a matter of fact, Napoleon had already left his shabby lodgings for better ones in Michodière street, and was actually negotiating for the purchase of a handsome detached residence near that of Bourrienne, whose fortunes had also been retrieved. The country-seat which the speculator had in view, and for which he intended to bid as high as a million and a half of francs, was knocked down to another purchaser for three millions or, as the price of gold then was, about forty thousand dollars! So great a personage must, of course, have a secretary, and the faithful Junot had been appointed to the office.

The application for the horses turned out a serious matter, and brought the adventurer once more to the verge of ruin. The story he told was not plain, the records did not substantiate it, the hard-headed officials of the war department evidently did not believe a syllable of his representations,—which, in fact, were untruthful,—and, the central committee having again lost a third of its members by ro-



IN THE MUSEUM OF VERSAILLES

ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

GENERAL-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY OF ITALY

FROM THE PAINTING BY JEAN-SEBASTIEN ROUILLARD. PAINTED IN 1836

tation, among them Doulcet, there was no one now in it to plead Buonaparte's cause. Accordingly there was no little talk about the matter in very influential circles, and almost simultaneously was issued the report concerning his formal request for restoration, which had been delayed by the routine prescribed in such cases, and was only now completed. It was not only adverse in itself, but contained a confidential inclosure animadverting severely on the irregularities of the petitioner's conduct, and in particular on his stubborn refusal to obey orders and join the Army of the West. Thus it happened that on September fifteenth the name of Buonaparte was officially struck from the list of general officers on duty, "in view of his refusal to proceed to the post assigned him." It really appeared as if the name of Napoleon might almost have been substituted for that of Tantalus in the fable. But it was the irony of fate that on this very day the subcommittee on foreign affairs submitted to the full meeting a proposition to send the man who was now a disgraced culprit in great state and with a full suite to take service at Constantinople in the army of the Grand Turk!

No one had ever understood better than Buonaparte the possibilities of political influence in a military career. Not only could he bend the bow of Achilles, but he always had ready an extra string. Thus far in his ten years of service he had been promoted only once according to routine; the other steps of the height which he had reached had been secured by influence or chicane. He had been first Corsican and then French, first a politician and then a soldier. Such a veteran was not to be dismayed even by the most stunning blow; had he not even now three powerful protectors—Barras, Tallien, and Fréron? He turned his back, therefore, with ready adaptability on the unsympathetic officials of the army, the mere soldiers with cool heads and merciless judgment. The evident short cut to restoration was to carry through the project of employment at Constantinople; it had been formally recommended, and to secure its adoption he renewed his importunate solicitations. His rank he still held; he might hope to regain position by some brilliant stroke such as he could execute only without the restraint of orders and on his own initiative. His hopes grew, or seemed to, as his suit was not rejected, and he wrote to Joseph on September twenty-sixth that the matter of his departure was urgent; adding, however: "But at this moment there are some ebullitions and incendiary symptoms." He was right in both surmises.

The Committee of Safety was formally considering the proposition for his transfer to the Sultan's service, while simultaneously affairs both in Paris and on the frontiers alike were "boiling."

Meantime the royalists and clericals had not been idle. They had learned nothing from the events of the Revolution, and did not even dimly understand their own position. Their own allies repudiated both their sentiments and their actions in the very moments when they believed themselves to be honorably fighting for self-preservation. English statesmen like Granville and Harcourt now thought and said that it was impossible to impose on France a form of government distasteful to her people; but the British regent and the French pretender, who, on the death of his unfortunate nephew, the dauphin, had been recognized by the powers as Louis XVIII., were stubbornly united under the old Bourbon motto, "All or nothing." The change in the Convention, in Paris society, even in the country itself, which was about to desert its extreme Jacobinism and to adopt the new constitution by an overwhelming vote—all this deceived them, and they determined to strike for everything they had lost. Preparations, it is now believed, were all ready for an inroad from the Rhine frontier, for Pichegru to raise the white flag and to advance with his troops on Paris, and for a simultaneous rising of the royalists in every French district. On October fourth an English fleet had appeared on the northern shore of France, having on board the Count of Artois and a large body of emigrants, accompanied by a powerful force of English, composed in part of regulars, in part of volunteers. This completed the preliminary measures.

With the first great conflict in the struggle, avowed royalism had only an indirect connection. By this time the Paris sections were thoroughly reorganized, having purged themselves of the extreme democratic elements from the suburbs. They were well drilled, well armed, and enthusiastic for resistance to the decree of the Convention requiring the compulsory reëlection of a certain proportion of its members. The National Guard was not less embittered against that measure. There were three experienced officers then in Paris who were capable of leading an insurrection, and could be relied on to oppose the Convention. These were Danican, Duhoux d'Hauterive, and Laffont, all royalists at heart; the last was an emigrant, and avowed it. The Convention had also by this time completed its enlistment, and had taken other measures of defense; but it was without a trustworthy person to command its forces, for among the fourteen generals of the republic then present in Paris, only two were certainly loyal to the Convention, and both these were men of very indifferent character and officers of no capacity.

The Convention forces were technically a part of the army known as that of the interior, of which Menou was the commander. The new constitution having been formally proclaimed on September twenty-third, the signs of open rebellion in Paris became too clear to be longer disregarded, and on that night a mass meeting of the various sections was held in the Odéon theater in order to prepare plans for open resistance. That of Lepelletier, in the heart of Paris, comprising the wealthiest and most influential of the mercantile class, afterward assembled in its hall and issued a call to rebellion. These were no contemptible foes: on the memorable tenth of August, theirs had been the battalion of the National Guard which died with the Swiss in defense of the Tuileries. Menou, in obedience to the command of the Convention to disarm the insurgent sections, confronted them for a moment. But the work was not to his taste. After a short parley, during which he feebly recommended them to disperse and behave like good citizens, he withdrew his forces to their barracks, and left the armed and angry sections masters of the situation. Prompt and energetic measures were more necessary than ever. For some days already the Convention leaders had been discussing their plans. Carnot and Tallien finally agreed with Barras that the man most likely to do thoroughly the active work was Buonaparte. But, apparently, they dared not altogether trust him, for Barras himself was appointed commander-in-chief. His "little Corsican officer, who will not stand on ceremony," as he called him, was to be nominally lieutenant. On October fourth Buonaparte was summoned to a conference. The messengers sought him at his lodgings and in all his haunts, but could not find him. It was nine in the evening when he appeared at headquarters in the Place du Carrousel. This delay gave Barras a chance to insinuate that his ardent republican friend, who all the previous week had been eagerly soliciting employment, was untrustworthy in the crisis, and had been negotiating with the sectionaries. Buonaparte reported himself as having come from the section of Lepelletier, but as having been reconnoitering the enemy. After a rather tart conversation Barras appointed him aide-de-camp, the position for which he had been destined from the first. Whatever was the general's understanding of the situation, that of the aide was clear — that he was to be his own master.

Not a moment was lost, and throughout the night most vigorous and incessant preparation was made. Buonaparte was as much himself in the streets of Paris as in those of Ajaccio, except that his energy was proportionately more feverish, as the defense of the Tuileries and the riding-school attached to it, in which the Convention sat, was a grander task than the never-accomplished capture of the Corsican citadel. The avenues and streets of a city somewhat resemble the main and tributary valleys of a mountain-range, and the task of campaigning in Paris was less unlike that of manœuvering in the narrow gorges of the Apennines than might be supposed; at least Buonaparte's strategy was nearly identical for both. All his measures were masterly. The foe, scattered as yet throughout Paris on both sides of the river, was first cut in two by seizing and fortifying the bridges across the Seine; then every avenue of approach was likewise guarded, while flanking artillery was set in the narrow streets to command the main arteries. Finally a reserve, ready for use on either side of the river, was established in what is now the Place de la Concorde, with an open line of retreat toward St. Cloud behind it. Every order was issued in Barras's name, and Barras, in his memoirs, claims all the honors of the day. He declares that his aide was afoot, while he was the man on horseback, ubiquitous and masterful. He does not even admit that Buonaparte bestrode a cab-horse, as even the vanquished were ready to acknowledge. The sections, of course, knew nothing of the new commander or of Buonaparte, and recalled only Menou's pusillanimity. Without cannon and without a plan, they determined to drive out the Convention at once, and to overwhelm its forces by superior numbers. The quays of the left bank were therefore occupied by a large body of the National Guard, ready to rush in from behind when the main attack, made from the north through the labyrinth of streets and blind alleys then designated by the name of St. Honoré, and by the short, wide passage of l'Échelle, should draw the Convention forces away in that direction to resist it. A kind of rendezvous had been appointed at the church of St. Roch, which was to be used as a depot of supplies and a retreat. Numerous sectionaries were, in fact, posted there as auxiliaries at the crucial instant.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DAY OF THE PARIS SECTIONS

THE WARFARE AT ST. ROCH AND THE PONT ROYAL—ORDER RESTORED—MEANING OF THE CONFLICT—POLITICAL DANGERS—BONAPARTE'S DILEMMA—HIS TRUE ATTITUDE—SUDDEN WEALTH—THE DIRECTORY AND THEIR GENERAL—BONAPARTE IN LOVE—HIS CORSICAN TEMPERAMENT—HIS MATRIMONIAL ADVENTURES.

IN this general position the opposing forces confronted each other on the morning of October fifth, the thirteenth of Vendémiaire. Both seemed loath to begin. But at half-past four in the afternoon it was clear that the decisive moment had come. As if by instinct, but in reality at Danican's signal, the forces of the sections from the northern portion of the capital began to pour through the narrow main street of St. Honoré, behind the riding-school, toward the chief entrance of the Tuileries. They no doubt felt safer in the rear of the Convention hall, with the high wall of houses all about, than they would have done in the open spaces which they would have had to cross in order to attack it from the front. When their compacted mass reached the church of St. Roch, and, taking a stand, suddenly became aware that in the side streets on the right were yawning the muzzles of hostile cannon, the excited citizens lost their heads, and began to discharge their muskets. Then with a swift, sudden blast, the street was cleared by a terrible discharge of the shrapnel, canister, and grape-shot with which the great guns of Barras and Buonaparte were loaded. The action continued about an hour, for the people and the National Guard rallied again and again, each time to be mowed down by a like awful discharge. At last they could be rallied no longer, and retreated. On the left bank a similar mêlée ended in a similar way. Three times Laffont gathered his forces and hurled them at the Pont Royal; three times they were

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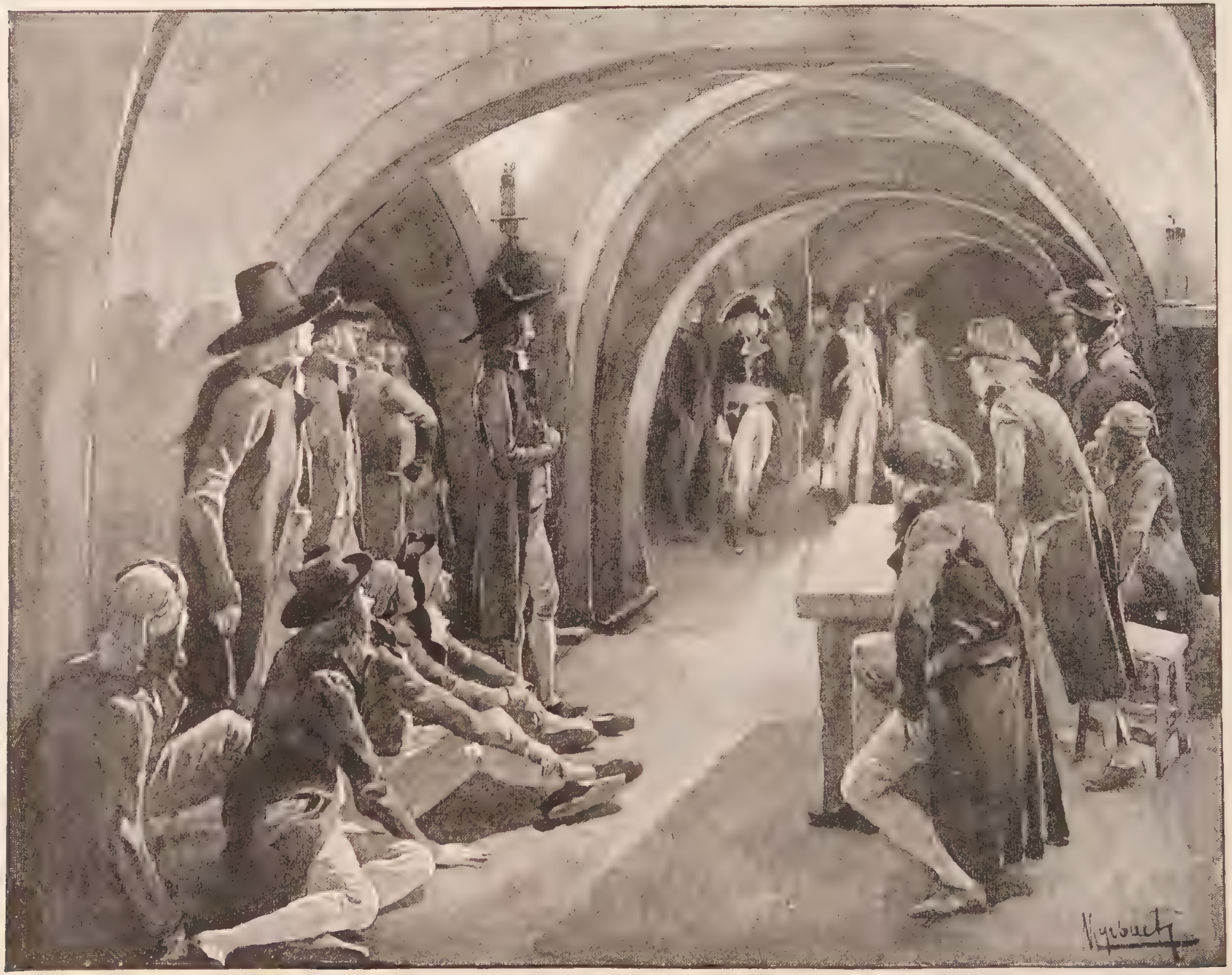
swept back by the cross-fire of artillery. The scene then changed like the vanishing of a mirage. Awe-stricken messengers appeared, hurrying everywhere with the prostrating news from both sides of the river, and the entire Parisian force withdrew to shelter. Before nightfall the triumph of the Convention was complete. The dramatic effect of this achievement was heightened by the appearance on horseback here, there, and everywhere, during the short hour of battle, of an awe-inspiring leader; both before and after, he was unseen. In spite of Barras's claims, there can be no doubt that this dramatic personage was Buonaparte. If not, for what was he so signally rewarded in the immediate sequel? Barras was no artillerist, and this was the appearance of an expert giving masterly lessons in artillery practice to an astonished world, which little dreamed what he was yet to demonstrate as to the worth of his chosen arm on wider battle-fields. For the moment it suited Buonaparte to appear merely as an agent. In his reports of the affair his own name is kept in the background. It is evident that from first to last he intended to produce the impression that, though acting with Jacobins, he does so because they for the time represent the truth: he is not for that reason to be identified with them.

There was no renewal of the reign of terror. A few conspicuous leaders were executed, among them Laffont, and harsh measures were enacted in relation to the political status of returned emigrants. But in the main an unexpected mercy controlled the Convention's policy. They closed the halls in which the people of the mutinous wards had met, and once more reorganized the National Guard. Order was restored without an effort. Beyond the walls of Paris the effect of the news was magical. Artois, afterward Charles X., though he had landed three days before on Île Dieu, now reëmbarked, and sailed back to England, while the other royalist leaders prudently held their followers in check and their measures in abeyance. The new constitution was in a short time offered to the nation, and accepted by an overwhelming majority; the members of the Convention were assured of their ascendancy in the new legislature; and before long the rebellion in Vendée and Brittany was so far crushed as to release eighty thousand troops for service abroad. For the leaders of its forces the Convention made a most liberal provision: the division commanders of the thirteenth of Vendémiaire were all promoted. Buonaparte was made second in command of the Army of the Interior: in other words, was confirmed in an office he had both created and rendered illustrious. As Barras almost immediately resigned, this was equivalent to very high promotion.

This memorable "day of the sections," as it is often called, was an unhallowed day for France and French liberty. It was the first appearance of the army since the Revolution as a support to political authority; it was the beginning of a process which made the commander-in-chief of the army the dictator of France. All purely political powers were gradually to vanish in order to make way for a military state. The temporary tyranny of the Convention rested on a measure, at least, of popular consent; but in the very midst of its preparations to perpetuate a purely civil and political administration, the violence of the sections had compelled it to confide the new institutions to the keeping of soldiers. The idealism of the new constitution was manifest from the beginning. Every chance which the Directory had for success was dependent, not on the inherent worth of the system or its adaptability to present conditions, but on the support of interested men in power; among these the commanders of the army were not the least influential. After the suppression of the sections, the old Convention continued to sit under the style of the Primary Assembly, and was ostensibly occupied in selecting those of its members who were to be returned to the legislature under the new constitution. There being no provision for any interim government, the exercise of real power was suspended; the magistracy was a house swept and garnished, ready for the first comer to occupy it.

As the army and not the people had made the coming administration possible, the executive power would from the first be the creature of the army; and since under the constitutional provisions there was no legal means of compromise between the Directory and the legislature in case of conflict, so that the stronger would necessarily crush the weaker, the armed power supporting the directors must therefore triumph in the end, and the man who controlled that must become the master of the Directory and the ruler of the country. Moreover, a people can be free only when the first and unquestioning devotion of every citizen is not to a party, but to his country and its constitution, his party allegiance being entirely secondary. This was far from being the case in France: the nation was divided into irreconcilable camps, not of constitutional parties, but of violent partizans; many even of the moderate republicans now openly expressed a desire for some kind of monarchy. Outwardly the constitution was the freest so far devised. Three fatal blunders had been made which rendered it the best possible tool for a tyrant: it could not be changed for a long period; there was no arbiter but force between a warring legislative and executive; the executive was now supported by the army.

It is impossible to prove that Buonaparte understood all this at the time. When at St. Helena he spoke as if he did; but unfortunately his later writings, however valuable from the psychological, are worthless from the historical, standpoint. They abound in misrepresentations which are in part due to lapse of time and weakness of memory, in part to wilful intention. Wishing the Robespierre-Salicetti episode of his life to be forgotten, he strives in his memoirs to create the impression that the Convention had ordered him to take charge of the artillery at Toulon, when in fact he was in Marseilles as a mere passer-by on his journey to Nice, and in Toulon as a temporary adjunct to the army of Carteaux, having been made an active participant partly through accident, partly by the good will of personal friends. In the same way he also devised a fable about the "day of the sections," in order that he might not appear to have been scheming for himself in the councils of the Convention, and that Barras's share in his elevation might be consigned to oblivion. This story of Napoleon's has come down in three stages of its development, by as many different transcribers, who heard it at different times. The final one, as given by Las Cases, was corrected by Napoleon's own hand. It runs as follows: On the night of October third he was at the theater, but hearing that Menou had virtually retreated before the wards, and was to be arrested, he left and went to the meeting of the Convention, where, as he stood among the spectators, he heard his own name mentioned as Menou's successor. For half an hour he deliberated what he should do if chosen. If defeated, he would be execrated by all coming generations, while victory would be almost odious. How could he deliberately become the scapegoat of so many crimes to which he had been an utter stranger? Why go as an avowed Jacobin and in a few hours swell the list of names uttered with horror? "On the other hand, if the Convention be crushed, what becomes of the great truths of our Revolution? Our many victories, our blood so often shed, are all nothing but shameful deeds. The foreigner we have so thoroughly conquered triumphs and over-



AQUARELLE MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

BONAPARTE CLOSING THE PANTHÉON CLUB

FROM THE AQUARELLE BY F. DE MYRBACH, FROM DATA FURNISHED TO THE ARTIST BY FRÉDÉRIC MASSON

whelms us with his contempt; an incapable race, an overbearing and unnatural following, reappear triumphant, throw up our crime to us, wreak their vengeance, and govern us like helots by the hand of a stranger. Thus the defeat of the Convention would crown the brow of the foreigner, and seal the disgrace and slavery of our native land." Such thoughts, his youth, trust in his own power and in his destiny, turned the balance.

Statements made under such circumstances are not proof; but there is this much probability of truth in them, that if we imagine the old Buonaparte in disgrace as of old, following as of old the promptings of his curiosity, indifferent as of old to the success of either principle, and by instinct a soldier as of old,—if we recall him in this character, and remember that he is no longer a youthful Corsican patriot, but a mature cosmopolitan consumed with personal ambition,—we may surely conclude that he was perfectly impartial as to the parties involved, leaned toward the support of the principles of the Revolution as he understood them, and saw in the complications of the hour a probable opening for his ambition. At any rate, his conduct after October fourth seems to uphold this view. He was a changed man, ardent, hopeful, and irrepressible, as he had ever been when lucky; but now, besides, daring, overbearing, and self-confident to a degree which those characteristic qualities had never reached before.

His first care was to place on a footing of efficiency the Army of the Interior, scattered in many departments, undisciplined and disorganized; the next, to cow into submission all the low elements in Paris, still hungry and fierce, by reorganizing the National Guard, and forming a picked troop for the special protection of the legislature; the next, to show himself as the powerful friend of every one in disgrace, as a man of the world without rancor or exaggerated partizanship. At the same time he plunged into speculation, and sent sums incredibly large to various members of his family, a single remittance of four hundred thousand francs being mentioned in his letters. Lucien was restored to the arms of his low-born but faithful and beloved wife, and sent to join his mother and sisters in Marseilles; Louis was brought from Châlons, and made a lieutenant; Jerome was put at school in Paris; and to Joseph a consulate was assured. Putting aside all bashfulness, General Buonaparte became a full-fledged society man and a beau. No social rank was now strange to him; the remnants of the old aristocracy, the wealthy citizens of Paris, the returning Girondists, many of whom had become pronounced royalists, the new deputies, the officers who in some turn of the wheel had, like himself, lost their positions, but were now, through his favor, reinstated — all these he strove to court, flatter, and make his own.

Such activity, of course, could not pass unnoticed. The new government had been constituted without disturbance, the Directory chosen, and the legislature installed. Of the five directors — Barras, Rewbell, Carnot, Letourneaux de la Manche, and Larevellière-Lépeaux — all had voted for the death of Louis XVI., and were so-called regicides; but, while varying widely in character and ability, they were all, excepting Barras, true to their convictions. They scarcely understood how strong the revulsion of popular feeling had been, and, utterly ignoring the impossibility of harmonious action among themselves, hoped to exercise their power with such moderation as to win all classes to the new constitution. They were extremely disturbed by the course of the general commanding their army in seeking intimacy with men of all opinions, but were unwilling to interpret it aright. Under the Convention, the Army of the Interior had been a tool, its commander a mere puppet; now the executive was confronted by an independence which threatened a reversal of rôles. This situation was the more disquieting because Buonaparte was a capable and not unwilling police officer. Among many other invaluable services to the government, he closed in person the great club of the Panthéon, which was the rallying-point of the disaffected. Throughout another winter of famine there was not a single dangerous outbreak. At the same time there were frequent manifestations of jealousy in lower circles, especially among those who knew the origin and career of their new master.

Toward the close of the year the bearing and behavior of the general became constrained, reserved, and awkward. Various reasons were assigned for this demeanor. Many thought it was due to a consciousness of social deficiency, and his detractors still declare that Paris life was too fierce for even his self-assurance, pointing to the change in his handwriting and grammar, to his alternate silence and loquacity, as a proof of mental uneasiness; to his sullen musings and coarse threats as a theatrical affectation to hide wounded pride; and to his coming marriage as a desperate shift to secure a social dignity proportionate to the career he saw opening before him in politics and war. In a common man not subjected to a microscopic examination, such conduct would be attributed to his being in love; the wedding would ordinarily be regarded as the natural and beautiful consequence of a great passion.

Men have not forgotten that Buonaparte once denounced love as a hurtful passion from which God should protect his creatures; and they have, for this, among other reasons, pronounced him incapable of disinterested affection. But it is also true that he likewise denounced Buttafuoco for having, among other crimes committed by him, "married to extend his influence"; and we are forced to ask which of the two sentiments is genuine and characteristic. Probably both and neither, according to the mood of the man. Outward caprice is, in great natures, often the mask of inward perseverance, especially among the unprincipled who suit their language to their present purpose, in fine disdain of commonplace consistency. The primitive Corsican was both rude and gentle, easily moved to tears at one time, insensate at another; selfish at one moment, lavish at another; and yet he had a consistent character. Although disliking in later life to be called a Corsican, Napoleon was nevertheless typical of his race: he could despise love, yet render himself its willing slave; he was fierce and dictatorial, yet, as the present object of his passion said, "tenderer and weaker than anybody dreamed."

And thus it was in the matter of his courtship; there were elements in it of romantic, abandoned passion, but likewise of shrewd, calculating selfishness. In his callow youth his relations to the other sex had been either childish, morbid, or immoral. During his earliest manhood he had appeared like one who desired the training rather than the substance of gallantry. As a Jacobin he sought such support as he could find in the good will of the women related to men in power; as a French patriot he put forth strenuous efforts to secure an influential alliance through matrimony. He appears to have addressed Mme. Permon, whose fortune, despite her advanced age, would have been a great relief to his destitution. Refused by her, he was in a disordered and desperate emotional state until military and political success gave him sufficient self-confidence to try once more. With his feet firmly planted on the ladder of ambition, he was not indifferent to securing social props for a further rise, but was nevertheless in such a tumult of feeling as to make him particularly receptive to real passion. It is certain that he made advances for the hand of the rich and beau-

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tiful Désirée Clary. The first evidence in his correspondence of a serious intention to marry her is contained in the letter of June eighteenth, 1795, to Joseph; and for a few weeks afterward he wrote at intervals with some impatience, as if she were coy. But the claim is advanced that Napoleon, visiting her long before at the request of Joseph, who was then enamoured of her, had himself become interested, and persuading his brother to marry her sister, had entered into an understanding with her which was equivalent to a betrothal; that time and distance had cooled his ardor; and that he virtually threw her over for Mme. Beauharnais, who dazzled and infatuated him. This claim is probably founded on fact, but there is no evidence sufficient to sustain a charge of positive bad faith on the part of Napoleon. Neither he nor Mlle. Clary appears to have been ardent when Joseph as intermediary began, according to French custom, to arrange the preliminaries of marriage; and when General Buonaparte fell madly in love with Mme. Beauharnais the matter was dropped.

CHAPTER XXIII

A MARRIAGE OF INCLINATION AND INTEREST

The Taschers and Beauharnais — Execution of Alexandre Beauharnais — Adventures of His Widow — Meeting of Napoleon and Josephine — The Latter's Uncertainties — Her Character and Station — Passion and Convenience — The Bride's Dowry — Bonaparte's Philosophy of Life — The Ladder to Glory.

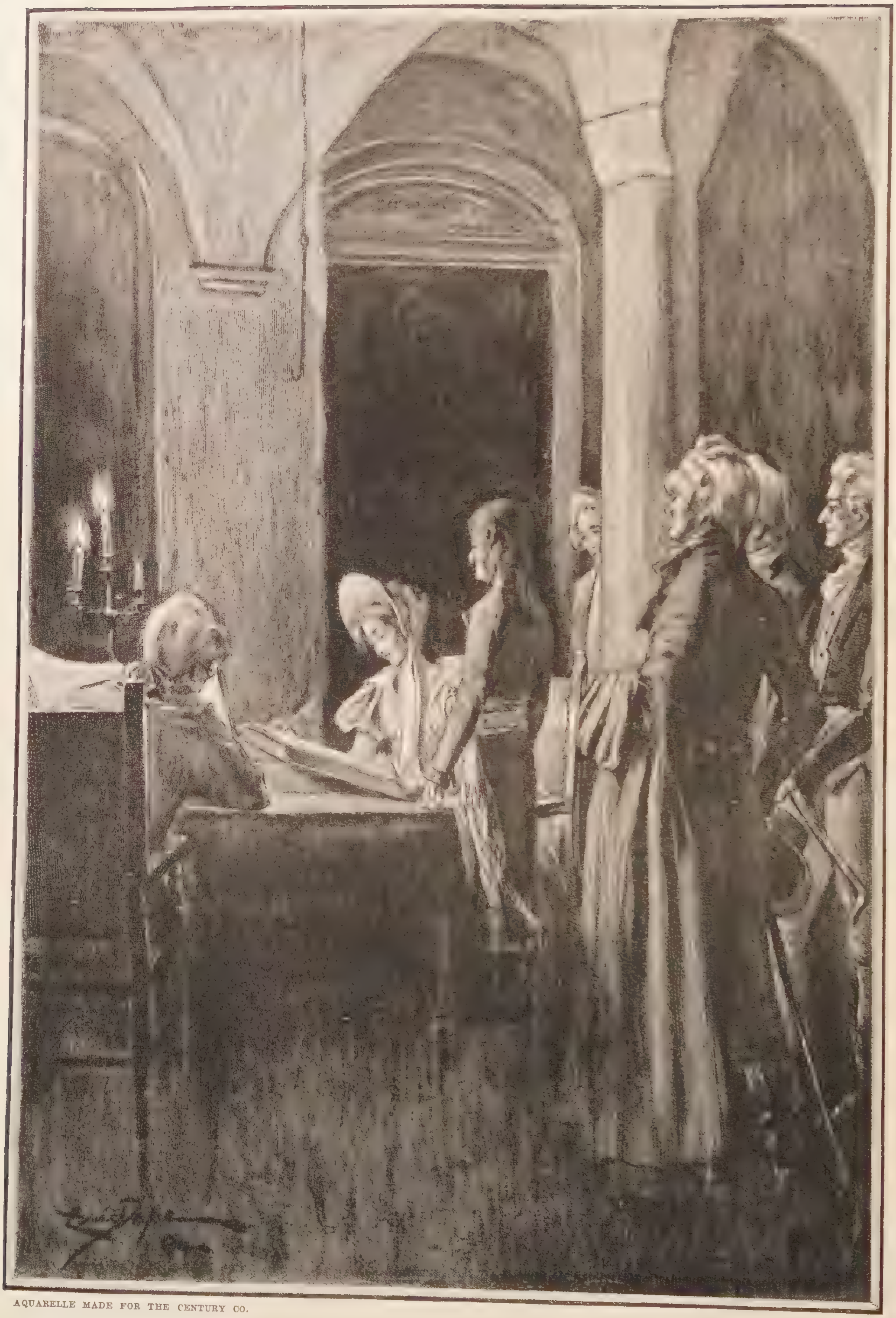
IN 1779, while the boys at Brienne were still tormenting the little untamed Corsican nobleman, and driving him to his garden fortalice, there to seek refuge from their taunts in company with his Plutarch, there had arrived in Paris from Martinique a successful planter of that island, a French gentleman of good family, M. Tascher de la Pagerie, bringing back to that city for the second time his daughter Josephine. She was then a girl of sixteen, without either beauty or education, but thoroughly matured, and with a quick Creole intelligence and a graceful litheness of figure which made her a most attractive woman. She had spent the years of her life from ten to fourteen in the convent of Port Royal. Having passed the interval in her native isle, she was about to contract a marriage which her relatives in France had arranged. Her betrothed was the younger son of a family friend, the Marquis de Beauharnais. The bride landed on October twentieth, and the ceremony took place on December thirteenth. The young vicomte brought his wife home to a suitable establishment in the capital. Two children were born to them — Eugène and Hortense; but before the birth of the latter the husband quarreled with his wife, for reasons that have never been known. The court granted a separation, with alimony, to Mme. de Beauharnais, who some years later withdrew to her father's home in Martinique. Her husband sailed to America with the forces of Bouillé, and remained there until the outbreak of the Revolution, when he returned, and was elected a deputy to the States-General.

Becoming an ardent republican, he was several times president of the National Assembly, and his house was an important center of influence. In 1790 M. Tascher died, and his daughter, with her children, returned to France. It was probably at her husband's instance, for she at once joined him at his country-seat, where they continued to live, as "brother and sister," until Citizen Beauharnais was made commander of the Army of the Rhine. As the days of the Terror approached, every man of noble blood was more and more in danger. At last Beauharnais's turn came; he too was denounced to the Commune, and imprisoned. Before long his wife was behind the same bars. Their children were in the care of an aunt, Mme. Églé, who had been, and was again to be, a woman of distinction in the social world, but had temporarily sought the protection of an old acquaintance, a former abbé, who had become a member of the Commune. The gallant young general was not one of the four acquitted out of the batch of forty-nine among whom he was finally summoned to the bar of the revolutionary tribunal. He died on June twenty-third, 1794, true to his convictions, acknowledging in his farewell letter to his wife a fraternal affection for her, and committing solemnly to her charge his own good name, which she was to restore by proving his devotion to France. The children were to be her consolation; they were to wipe out the disgrace of his punishment by the practice of virtue and—civism!

During her sojourn in prison Mme. Beauharnais had made a most useful friend. This was a fellow-sufferer of similar character, but far greater gifts, whose maiden name was Cabarrus, who was later Mme. de Fontenay, who was afterward divorced and, having married Tallien, the Convention deputy at Bordeaux, became renowned as his wife, and who, divorced a second and married a third time, died as the Princesse de Chimay. The ninth of Thermidor saved them both from the guillotine. In the days immediately subsequent they had abundant opportunity to display their light but clever natures. Mme. Beauharnais, as well as her friend, unfolded her wings like a butterfly as she escaped from the bars of her cell. Being a Creole, and having matured early, her physical charms were already fading. Her spirit, too, had reached and passed its zenith; for in her letters of that time she describes herself as listless. Nevertheless, in those very letters there is some sprightliness, and considerable ability of a certain kind. A few weeks after her liberation, having apprenticed Eugène and Hortense to an upholsterer and a dressmaker respectively, she was on terms of intimacy with Barras so close as to be considered suspicious, while her daily intercourse was with those who had brought her husband to a terrible end. In a luxurious and licentious society, she was a successful intriguer in matters both of politics and of pleasure; versed in the arts of coquetry and dress, she became for the needy and ambitious a successful intermediary with those in power. Preferring, as she rather ostentatiously asserted, to be guided by another's will, she gave little thought to her children, or to the sad legacy of her husband's good name. She emulated, outwardly at least, the unprincipled worldliness of those about her, although her friends believed her kind-hearted and virtuous. Whatever her true nature was, she had a station among the foremost of that gay set which was imitating the court circles of old, and an influence which had become not altogether agreeable to the immoral Provençal noble who entertained and supported the giddy coterie. Perhaps the extravagance of the languid Creole was as trying to Barras as it became afterward to her second husband.

The meeting of Napoleon and Josephine was an event of the first importance. His own account twice relates that a beautiful and tearful boy presented himself, soon after the disarmament of the sections, to the commander of the city, and asked for the sword of his father. The request was granted, and next day the boy's mother, Mme. Beauharnais, came to thank the general for his kindly act of restitution. Captivated by her grace, Buonaparte was thenceforward her slave. A cold critic must remember that in the first place there was no disarmament of anybody after the events of October fifth, the only action of the Convention which might even be construed into hostility being a decree making emigrants ineligible for election to the legislature under the new constitution; that in the second place this story attributes to destiny what was really due to the friendship of Barras, a fact which his beneficiary would like to have forgotten or concealed; and finally, that the beneficiary left another account in which he confessed that he had first met his wife at Barras's house, this being confirmed by Lucien in his memoirs. Of the passion there is no doubt; it was a composite emotion, made up in part of sentiment, in part of self-interest. Those who are born to rude and simple conditions in life are often dazzled by the charmed etiquette and mysterious forms of artificial society. Napoleon never affected to have been born to the manner, nor did he ever pretend to have adopted its exacting self-control, for he could not; although after the winter of 1795 he frequently displayed a weak and exaggerated regard for social conventions. It was not that he had need to assume a false and superficial polish, or that he particularly cared to show his equality with those accustomed to polite society; but that he probably conceived the splendid display and significant formality of that ancient nobility which had so cruelly snubbed him from the outset to be, nevertheless, the best conceivable prop to a throne.

Lucien looked on with interest, and thought that during the whole winter his brother was rather courted than a suitor. In his memoirs he naïvely wonders what Napoleon would have done in Asia,—either in the Indian service of England, or against her in that of Russia, for in his early youth he had also thought of that,—in fact, what he would have done at all, without the protection of women, in which he so firmly believed, if he had not, after the manner of Mohammed, found a Kadijah at least ten years older than himself, by whose favor he was set at the opening of a great career. There are hints, too, in various contemporary documents and in the circumstances themselves that Barras was an adroit match-maker. In a letter attributed to Josephine, but without address, a bright light seems to be thrown on the facts. She asks a female friend for advice on the question of the match. After a jocular introduction of her suitor as anxious to become a father to the children of Alexandre de Beauharnais and the husband of his widow, she gives a sportive but merciless dissection of her own character, and declares that while she does not love Buonaparte, she feels no repugnance. But can she meet his wishes or fulfil his desires? "I admire the general's courage; the extent of his information about all manner of things, concerning which he talks equally well; the quickness of his intelligence, which makes him catch the thought of another even before it is expressed: but I confess I am afraid of the power he seems anxious to wield over all about him. His piercing scrutiny has in it something strange and inexplicable, that awes even our directors; think, then, how it frightens a woman." The writer is also terrified by the very ardor of her suitor's passion. Past her first youth, how can she hope to keep for herself that "violent ten-



AQUARELLE MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

THE CIVIL MARRIAGE OF NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE

FROM THE AQUARELLE BY ERIC PAPE

derness" which is almost a frenzy? Would he not soon cease to love her, and regret the marriage? If so, her only resource would be tears—a sorry one, indeed, but still the only one. "Barras declares that if I marry the general, he will secure for him the chief command of the Army of Italy. Yesterday Bonaparte, speaking of this favor, which, although not yet granted, already has set his colleagues in arms to murmuring, said: 'Do they think I need protection to succeed? Some day they will be only too happy if I give them mine. My sword is at my side, and with it I shall go far.' What do you think of this assurance of success? Is it not a proof of confidence arising from excessive self-esteem? A general of brigade protecting the heads of the government! I don't know; but sometimes this ridiculous self-reliance leads me to the point of believing everything possible which this strange man would have me do; and with his imagination, who can reckon what he would undertake?" This letter, though often quoted, is so remarkable that, as some think, it may be a later invention. If written later, it was probably the invention of Josephine herself.

The divinity who could awaken such ardor in a Napoleon was in reality six years older than her suitor, and Lucien proves by his exaggeration of four years that she certainly looked more than her real age. She had no fortune, though by the subterfuges of which a clever woman could make use she led Buonaparte to think her in affluent circumstances. She had no social station; for her drawing-room, though frequented by men of ancient name and exalted position, was not graced by the presence of their wives. The very house she occupied had a doubtful reputation, having been a gift to the wife of Talma the actor from one of her lovers, and being a loan to Mme. Beauharnais from Barras. She had thin brown hair, a complexion neither fresh nor faded, expressive eyes, a small retroussé nose, a pretty mouth, and a voice that charmed all listeners. She was rather undersized, but her figure was so perfectly proportioned as to give the impression of height and suppleness. Its charms were scarcely concealed by the clothing she wore, made as it was in the suggestive fashion of the day, with no support to the form but a belt, and as scanty about her shoulders as it was about her shapely feet. It appears to have been her elegance and her manners, as well as her sensuality, which overpowered Buonaparte; for he described her as having "the calm and dignified demeanor which belongs to the old régime."

CHAP. XXIII
1796

What motives may have combined to overcome her scruples we cannot tell; perhaps a love of adventure, probably an awakened ambition for a success in other domains than the one which advancing years would soon compel her to abandon. She knew that Buonaparte had no fortune whatever, but she also knew, on the highest authority, that both favor and fortune would by her assistance soon be his. At all events, his suit made swift advance, and by the end of January, 1796, he was secure of his prize. His love-letters, to judge from one which has been preserved, were as fiery as the despatches with which he soon began to electrify his soldiers and all France. "I awaken full of thee," he wrote; "thy portrait and yester eve's intoxicating charm have left my senses no repose. Sweet and matchless Josephine, how strange your influence upon my heart! Are you angry, do I see you sad, are you uneasy, . . . my soul is moved with grief, and there is no rest for your friend; but is there then more when, yielding to an overmastering desire, I draw from your lips, your heart, a flame which consumes me? Ah, this very night, I knew your portrait was not you! Thou leavest at noon; three hours more, and I shall see thee again. Meantime, *mio dolce amor*, a thousand kisses; but give me none, for they set me all afire." What genuine and reckless passion! The "thou" and "you" may be strangely jumbled; the grammar may be mixed and bad; the language may even be somewhat indelicate, as it sounds in other passages than those given: but the meaning would be strong enough incense for the most exacting woman.

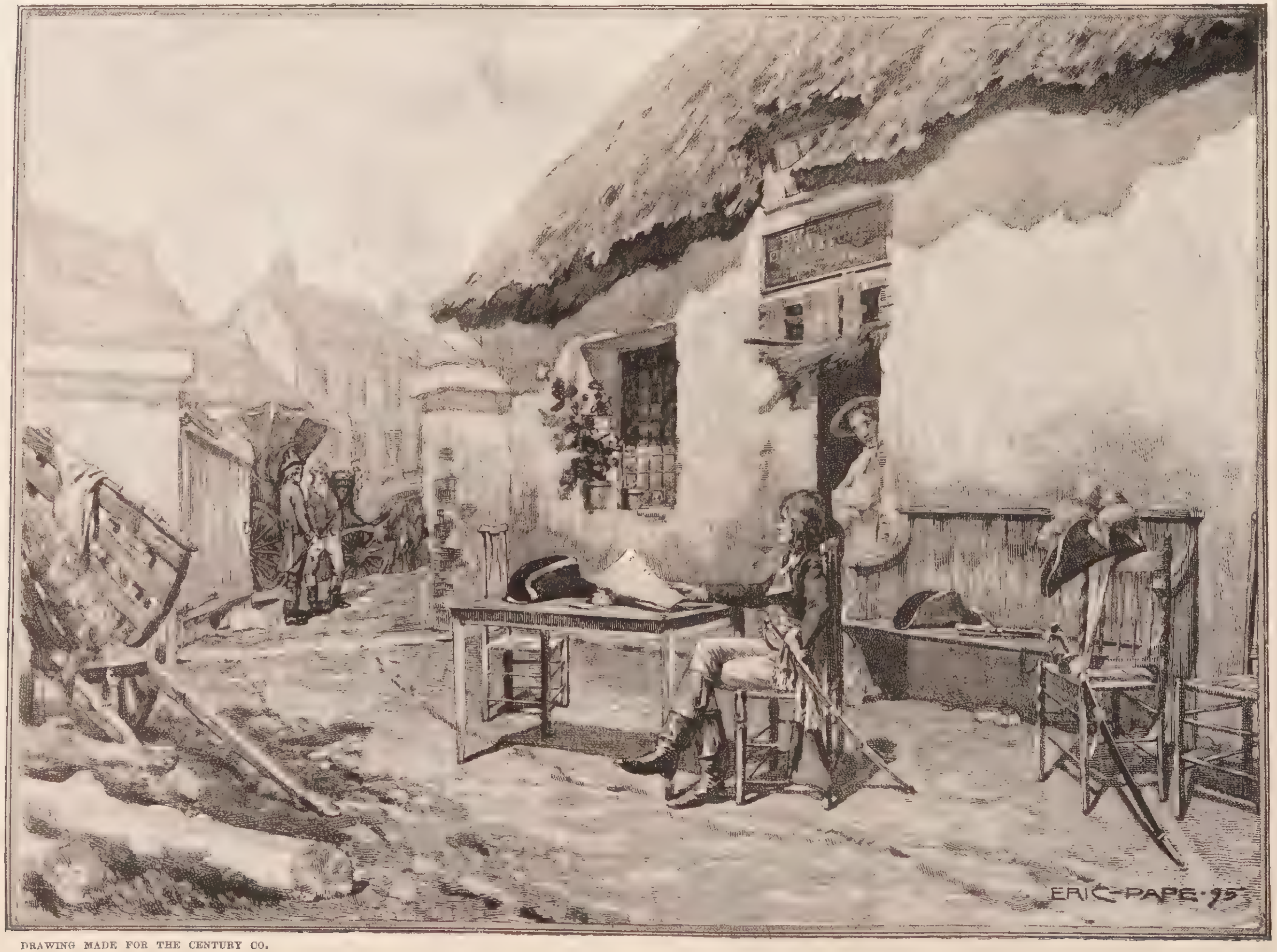
On February ninth, 1796, their bans were proclaimed; on March second the bridegroom received his bride's dowry in his own appointment, on Carnot's motion, not on that of Barras, as chief of the Army of Italy, still under the name of Buonaparte; on the seventh he was handed his commission; on the ninth the marriage ceremony was performed by the civil magistrate; and on the eleventh the husband started for his post. In the marriage certificate at Paris the groom gives his age as twenty-eight, but in reality he was not yet twenty-seven; the bride, who was thirty-three, gives hers as not quite twenty-nine. Her name is spelled Detascher, his Bonaparte. A new birth, a new baptism, a new career, a new start in a new sphere, Corsica forgotten, Jacobinism renounced, General and Mme. Bonaparte made their bow to the world. The ceremony attracted no public attention, and was most unceremonious, no member of the family from either side being present.

Madame Mère, in fact, was very angry, and foretold that with such a difference in age the union would be barren.

There was one weird omen which, read aright, distinguishes the otherwise commonplace occurrence. In the wedding-ring were two words—"To destiny." The words were ominous, for they were indicative of a policy long since formed and never afterward concealed, being a pretense to deceive Josephine as well as the rest of the world: the giver was about to assume a new rôle,—that of the "man of destiny,"—to work for a time on the imagination and superstition of his age. Sometimes he forgot his part, and displayed the shrewd, calculating, hard-working man behind the mask, who was less a fatalist than a personified fate, less a child of fortune than its maker. "Great events," he wrote a very short time later from Italy, "ever depend but upon a single hair. The adroit man profits by everything, neglects nothing which can increase his chances; the less adroit, by sometimes disregarding a single chance, fails in everything." Here is the whole philosophy of Bonaparte's life. He may have been sincere at times in the other profession; if so, it was because he could find no other expression for what in his nature corresponded to romance in others.

The general and his adjutant reached Marseilles in due season. The good news of Napoleon's successes having long preceded them, the home of the Buonapartes had become the resort of many among the best and most ambitious men in the southern land. Elisa was now twenty, and though much sought after, was showing a marked preference for Pasquale Bacciocchi, the poor young Corsican whom she afterward married. Pauline was sixteen, a great beauty, and deep in a serious flirtation with Fréron, who, not having been elected to the Five Hundred, had been appointed to a lucrative but uninfluential office in the great provincial town—that of commissioner for the department. Caroline, the youngest sister, was blossoming with greater promise even than Pauline. Napoleon stopped a few days under his mother's roof to regulate these matrimonial proceedings as he thought most advantageous. On March twenty-second he reached the headquarters of the Army of Italy. The command was assumed with simple and appropriate ceremonial. The short despatch to the Directory announcing this momentous event was signed "Bonaparte." The Corsican nobleman di Buonaparte was now entirely transformed into the French general Bonaparte. The process had been long and difficult: loyal Corsican;

mercenary cosmopolitan, ready as an expert artillery officer for service in any land or under any banner; lastly, Frenchman, liberal, and revolutionary. So far he had been consistent in each character; for years to come he remained stationary as a sincere French patriot, always of course with an eye to the main chance. As events unfolded, the transformation began again; and the "adroit" man, taking advantage of every chance, became once more a cosmopolitan — this time not as a soldier, but as a statesman; not as a servant, but as the *imperator universalis*, too large for a single land, determined to reunite once more all Western Christendom, and, like the great German Charles a thousand years before, make the imperial limits conterminous with those of orthodox Christianity. The power of this empire was, however, to rest on a Latin, not on a Teuton; not on Germany, but on France. Its splendor was not to be embodied in the Eternal City, but in Paris; and its destiny was not to bring in a Christian millennium for the glory of God, but a scientific equilibrium of social states to the glory of Napoleon's dynasty, permanent because universally beneficent.


ERIC-PAPE·95

DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

BONAPARTE ON THE ROAD FROM PARIS TO NICE

FROM THE DRAWING BY ERIC PAPE

CHAPTER XXIV

EUROPE AND THE DIRECTORY

THE FIRST COALITION—ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA—THE ARMIES OF THE REPUBLIC—THE TREASURY OF THE REPUBLIC—THE DIRECTORY—THE ABBÉ SIEYÈS—CARNOT AS A MODEL CITIZEN—HIS CAPACITY AS A MILITARY ORGANIZER—HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER—HIS POLICY—FRANCE AT THE OPENING OF 1796.

CHAP. XXIV
1796

THE great European coalition against France which had been formed in 1792 had in it little centripetal force. In 1795 Prussia, Spain, and Tuscany withdrew for reasons already indicated in another connection, and made their peace on terms as advantageous as they could secure. Holland was conquered by France in the winter of 1794–95, and to this day the illustrated school-books recall to every child of the French Republic the half-fabulous tale of how a Dutch fleet was captured by French hussars. The severity of the cold was long remembered as phenomenal, and the frozen harbors rendered naval resistance impossible, while cavalry manœuvered with safety on the thick ice. The Batavian Republic, as the Dutch commonwealth was now called, was really an appanage of France.

But England and Austria, though deserted by their strongest allies, were still redoubtable enemies. The policy of the former had been to command the seas and destroy the commerce of France on the one hand, on the other to foment disturbance in the country itself by subsidizing the royalists. In both plans she had been successful: her fleets were ubiquitous, the Chouan and Vendean uprisings were perennial, and the emigrant aristocrats menaced every frontier. Austria, on the other hand, had once been soundly thrashed. Since Frederick the Great had wrested Silesia from her, and thereby set Protestant Prussia among the great powers, she had felt that the balance of power was disturbed, and had sought everywhere for some territorial acquisition to restore her importance. The present emperor, Francis II., and his adroit minister, Thugut, were equally stubborn in their determination to draw something worth while from the seething caldron before the fires of war were extinguished. They thought of Bavaria, of Poland, of Turkey, and of Italy; in the last country especially it seemed as if the term of life had been reached for Venice, and that at her impending demise her fair domains on the mainland would amply replace Silesia. Russia saw her own advantage in the weakening either of Turkey or of the central European powers, and became the silent ally of Austria in this policy.

The great armies of the French republic had been created by Carnot, with the aid of his able lieutenant, Dubois de Crancé; they were organized and directed by the unassisted genius of the former. Being the first national armies which Europe had known, they were animated as no others had been by that form of patriotism which rests not merely on animal instinct, but on a principle. They had fought with joyous alacrity for the assertion, confirmation, and extension of the rights of man. In the march of events their patriotism had brought into prominence Rousseau's conception of natural boundaries. There was but one opinion in the entire nation concerning its frontiers, to wit: that Nice, Savoy, and the western bank of the Rhine were all by nature a part of France. As to what was beyond, opinion had been divided, some feeling that they should continue fighting in order to impose their own system wherever possible, while others, as has previously been explained, were either indifferent, or else maintained that the nation should fight only for its natural frontier. To the support of the latter sentiment came the general longing for peace which was gradually overpowering the whole country.

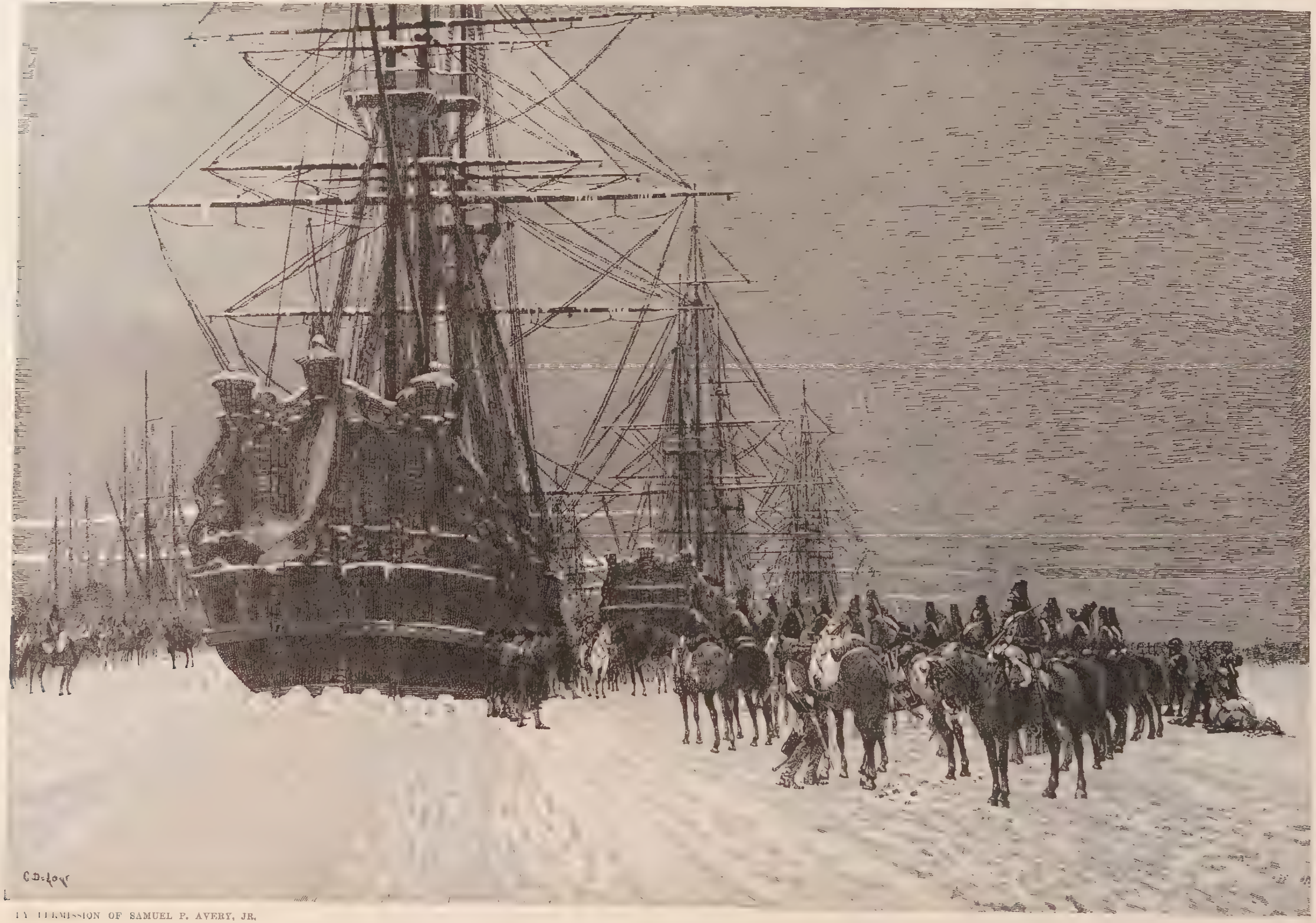
No people ever made such sacrifices for liberty as the French had made. Through years of famine they had starved with grim determination, and the leanness of their race was a byword for more than a generation. They had been for over a century the victims of a system abhorrent to both their intelligence and their character—a system of absolutism which had subsisted on foreign wars and on successful appeals to the national vainglory. Now at last they were to all appearance exhausted, their treasury was bankrupt, their paper money was worthless, their agriculture and industries were paralyzed, their foreign commerce was ruined; but their liberties were secure. Their soldiers were badly fed, badly armed, and badly clothed; but they were freemen under such discipline as is possible only among freemen. Why should not their success in the arts of peace be as great as in the glorious and successful wars they had carried on? There was, therefore, both in the country and in the government a considerable and ever growing party which demanded a general peace, but only with the "natural" frontier, and a small one which felt peace to be imperative even if the nation should be confined within its old boundaries.

But such a reasonable and moderate policy was impossible on two accounts. In consequence of the thirteenth of Vendémiaire, the radical party still survived and controlled the machinery of government; and, in spite of the seeming supremacy of moderate ideas, the royalists were still irreconcilable. Intestine disturbances, therefore, could be kept under some measure of control only by an aggressive foreign policy which should deceive the insurgent elements as to the resources of the government. Thus far, by hook or by crook, the armies, so far as they had been clothed and paid and fed at all, had been fed and paid and clothed by the administration at Paris. If the armies should still march and fight, the nation would be impressed by the strength of the Directory.

The Directory was by no means a homogeneous body. It is doubtful whether Barras was a sincere republican, or sincere in anything except in his effort to keep himself afloat on the tide of the times. It has been believed by many that he hoped for the restoration of monarchy through the disgust of the nation with such intolerable disorders as they would soon associate with the name of republic. His friendship for General Bonaparte was a mixed quantity; for while he undoubtedly wished to secure for the state in any future crisis the support of so able a man, he had at the same time used him as a sort of social scapegoat. His own strength lay in several facts: he had been Danton's follower; he had been an officer, and was appointed for that reason commanding general against the Paris sections; he had been shrewd enough to choose Bonaparte as his agent so that he enjoyed the prestige of Bonaparte's success; and in the new society of the capital he was magnificent, extravagant, and licentious, the only representative in the Directory of the newly aroused passion for life and pleasure, his colleagues being severe, unostentatious, and economical republicans.

Barras's main support in the government was Rewbell, a vigorous Alsatian and a bluff democrat, enthusiastic for the Revolution and its extension. He was no Frenchman himself, but a German, and thought that the German lands—Holland, Switzerland, Germany itself—should be brought into the great movement. Like Barras, who needed disorder for his Orleanist schemes and for the supply of his lavish purse, Rewbell despised the new constitution; but for a different reason. To him it appeared a flimsy, theoretical document, so subdividing the exercise of power as to destroy it altogether. His rôle was in the world of finance, and he was always suspected, though unjustly, of unholy alliances with army contractors and stock manipulators. Larevellière was another doctrinaire, but, in comparison with Rewbell, a bigot. He had been a Girondist, a good citizen, and active in the formation of the new constitution; but he lacked practical common sense, and hated the Church with as much narrow bitterness as the most rancorous modern agnostic,—seeking, however, not merely its destruction, but, like Robespierre, to substitute for it a cult of reason and humanity. The fourth member of the Directory, Letourneur, was a plain soldier, an officer in the engineers. With abundant common sense and a hard head, he, too, was a sincere republican; but he was a tolerant one, a moderate, kindly man like his friend Carnot, with whom, as time passed by and there was gradually developed an irreconcilable split in the Directory, he always voted in a minority of two against the other three.

At first the notorious Abbé Sieyès had been chosen a member of the executive. He was both deep and dark, like Bonaparte, to whom he later rendered valuable services. His ever famous pamphlet, which in 1789 triumphantly proved that the Third Estate was neither more nor less than the French nation, had made many think him a radical. As years passed on he became the oracle of his time, and as such acquired an enormous influence even in the days of the Terror, which he was helpless to avert, and which he viewed with horror and disgust. Whatever may have been his original ideas, he appears to have been for some time after the thirteenth of Vendémiaire an Orleanist, the head of a party which desired no longer a strict hereditary and absolute monarchy, but thought that in the son of Philippe Égalité they had a useful prince to preside over a constitutional kingdom. Perhaps for this reason, perhaps for the one he gave, which was that the new consti-



BY PERMISSION OF SAMUEL P. AVERY, JR.

ENGRAVED BY E. H. DEL'ORME

CAPTURE OF A DUTCH FLEET BY HUSSARS OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, JANUARY, 1795

tution was not yet the right one, he flatly refused the place in the Directory which was offered to him.

It was as a substitute for this dangerous visionary that Carnot was made a director. He was now in his forty-third year, and at the height of his powers. In him was embodied all that was moderate and sound, consequently all that was enduring, in the French Revolution; he was a thorough scholar, and his treatise on the metaphysics of the calculus forms an important chapter in the history of mathematical physics. As an officer in the engineers he had attained the highest distinction, while as minister of war he had shown himself an organizer and strategist of the first order. But his highest aim was to be a model French citizen. In his family relations as son, husband, and father, he was held by his neighbors to be a pattern; in his public life he strove with equal sincerity of purpose to illustrate the highest ideals of the eighteenth century. Such was the ardor of his republicanism that no man nor party in France was so repugnant but that he would use either one or both, if necessary, for his country's welfare, although he was like Chatham in his lofty scorn for parties. To him as a patriot, therefore, France, as against the outer world, was first, no matter what her government might be; but the France he yearned for was a land regenerated by the gospel of humanity, awakened to the highest activity by the equality of all before the law, refined by that self-abnegation of every man which makes all men brothers, and destroys the menace of the law.

And yet he was no dreamer. While a member of the National Assembly he had displayed such practical common sense in his chosen field of military science, that in 1793 he was intrusted by the Committee of Safety with the control of the war. The standard of rank and command was no longer birth nor seniority nor influence, but merit. The wild and ignorant hordes of men which the conscription law had brought into the field were something hitherto unknown in Europe. It was Carnot who organized, clothed, fed, and drilled them. It was he who devised the new tactics and evolved the new and comprehensive plans which made his national armies the power they became. It was in Carnot's administration that the young generals first came to the fore. It was by his favor that almost every man of that galaxy of modern warriors who so long dazzled Europe by their feats of arms first appeared as a candidate for advancement.

Moreau, Macdonald, Jourdan, Bernadotte, Kléber, Mortier, Ney, Pichegru, Desaix, Berthier, Augereau, and Bonaparte himself,—each one of these was the product of Carnot's system. He was the creator of the armies which for a time made all Europe tributary to France.

Throughout an epoch which laid bare the meanness of most natures, his character was unsmirched. He began life under the ancient régime by writing and publishing a eulogy on Vauban, who had been disgraced for his plain speaking to Louis XIV. When called to a share in the government he was the advocate of a strong nationality, of a just administration within, and of a fearless front to the world. While minister of war he on one occasion actually left his post and hastened to Maubeuge, where defeat was threatening Jourdan, devised and put into operation a new plan, led in person the victorious assault, and then returned to Paris to inspire the country and the army with news of the victory; all this he did as if it were commonplace duty, without advertising himself by parade or ceremony. Even Robespierre had trembled before his biting irony, and yet dared not, as he wished, include him among his victims. After the events of Thermidor, when it was proposed to execute all those who had authorized the bloody deeds of the Terror, excepting Carnot, he prevented the sweeping measure by standing in his place to say that he too had acted with the rest, had held like them the conviction that the country could not otherwise be saved, and that therefore he must share their fate.

In the milder light of the new constitution the dark blot on his record thus frankly confessed grew less repulsive as the continued dignity and sincerity of his nature asserted themselves in a tolerance which he believed to be as needful now as ruthless severity once had been. For a year the glory of French arms had been eclipsed: his dominant idea was first to restore their splendor, then to make peace with honor and give the new life of his country an opportunity for expansion in a mild and firm administration of the new laws. If he had been dictator in the crisis, no doubt his plan, arduous as was the task, might have been realized; but, with Letourneur in a minority of two, against an unprincipled adventurer leading two bigots, it was impossible to secure the executive unity necessary for success.

At the opening of the year 1796, therefore, the situation of France was quite as distracting as ever, and the foundation of her institutions more than ever unstable. There was hopeless division in the executive, and no coördination under the constitution between it and the other branches of the government, while the legislature did not represent the people. The treasury was empty, famine was as wide-spread as ever, administration virtually non-existent. The army was unsuccessful, dispirited, and unpaid. Hunger knows little discipline, and with temporary loss of discipline the morals of the troops had been undermined. To save the constitution public opinion must be diverted from internal affairs, and conciliated. To that end the German emperor must be forced to yield the Rhine frontier, and money must be found at least for the most pressing necessities of the army and of the government. If the republic could secure for France her natural borders, and command a peace by land, it might hope for eventual success in the conflict with England.

CHAPTER XXV

BONAPARTE ON A GREAT STAGE

Bonaparte and the Army of Italy—The System of Pillage—The General as a Despot—The Republican Armies and French Politics—Italy as the Focal Point—Condition of Italy—Bonaparte's Sagacity—His Plan of Action—His Army and Generals—Strength of the Army of Italy—The Napoleonic Maxims of Warfare—Advance of Military Science—Bonaparte's Achievements—His Financial Policy—Effects of his Success.

Chap. XXV
1796

THE struggle which was imminent was for nothing less than a new lease of national life for France. It dawned on many minds that in such a combat changes of a revolutionary nature — as regarded not merely the provisioning and management of armies, as regarded not merely the grand strategy to be adopted and carried out by France, but as regarded the very structure and relations of other European nations —would be justifiable. But to be justifiable they must be adequate; and to be adequate they must be unexpected and thorough. What should they be? The Œdipus who solves this riddle for France is the man of the hour. He was found in Bonaparte. What mean these ringing words from the headquarters at Nice, which, on March twenty-seventh, 1796, fell on the ears of a hungry, eager soldiery and a startled world? "Soldiers, you are naked, badly fed. The government owes you much; it can give you nothing. Your long-suffering, the courage you show among these crags, are splendid, but they bring you no glory; not a ray is reflected upon you. I wish to lead you into the most fertile plains of the world. Rich provinces, great towns, will be in your power; there you will find honor, glory, and riches. Soldiers of Italy, can you be found lacking in honor, courage, or constancy?"

Such language has but one meaning. By a previous understanding with the Directory, the French army was to be paid, the French treasury to be replenished, at the expense of the lands which were the seat of war. Corsicans in the French service had long been suspected of sometimes serving their own interests to the detriment of their adopted country. Bonaparte was no exception, and occasionally he felt it necessary to justify himself. For example, he had carefully explained that his marriage bound him to the republic by still another tie. Yet it appears that his promotion, his engagement with the directors, and his devotion to the republic were all concerned primarily with personal ambition, though secondarily and incidentally with the perpetuation of a government professedly based on the Revolution. From the outset of Napoleon's independent career, something of the future dictator appears. This implied promise that pillage, plunder, and rapine should henceforth go unpunished in order that his soldiers might line their pockets, is the indication of a settled policy which was more definitely expressed in each successive proclamation as it issued from his pen. It was repeated whenever new energy was to be inspired into faltering columns, whenever some unparalleled effort in a dark design was to be demanded from the rank and file of the army, until at last a point-blank promise was made that every man should return to France with money enough in his pocket to become a landowner.

There was magic in the new spell, the charm never ceased to work; with that first call from Nice began the transformation of the French army, fighting now no longer for principle, but for glory, victory, and booty. Its leader, if successful, would be in no sense a constitutional general, but a despotic conqueror. Outwardly gracious, and with no irritating condescension; considerate wherever mercy would strengthen his reputation; fully aware of the influence a dramatic situation or a pregnant aphorism has upon the common mind, and using both with mastery; appealing as a climax to the powerful motive of greed in every heart, Bonaparte was soon to be not alone the general of consummate genius, not alone the organizing lawgiver of conquered lands and peoples, but, what was essential to his whole career, the idol of an army which was not, as of old, the servant of a great nation, but, as the new era had transformed it, the nation itself.

The peculiar relation of Bonaparte to Italy, to Corsica, and to the Convention had made him, as early as 1794, while yet but chief of artillery, the real director of the Army of Italy. He had no personal share in the victorious campaign of that year, but its victories, as he justly claimed, were due to his plans. During the unsuccessful Corsican expedition of the following winter, for which he was but indirectly responsible, the Austro-Sardinians in Piedmont had taken advantage of the absence of so many French troops to undo all that had so far been accomplished. During the summer of 1795 Spain and Prussia had made peace with France. In consequence all northern Europe had been declared neutral, and the field of operations on the Rhine had been confined to the central zone of Germany, while at the same time the French soldiers which had formed the Army of the Pyrenees had been transferred to the Maritime Alps. In 1796, therefore, the great question was whether the Army of the Rhine or that of Italy was to be the chief weapon of offense against Austria.

Divided interests and warped convictions quickly created two opinions in the French nation, each of which was held with intensity and bitterness by its supporters. So far the Army of the Rhine was much the stronger, and the Emperor had concentrated his strength to oppose it. But the wisest heads saw that Austria might be flanked by way of Italy. The gate to Lombardy was guarded by the sturdy little army of Victor Amadeus, assisted by a small Austrian force. If the house of Savoy, which was said to wear at its girdle the keys of the Alps, could be conquered and brought to make a separate peace, the Austrian army could be overwhelmed, and a highway to Vienna opened first through the plains of Lombardy, then by the Austrian Tyrol, or else by the Venetian Alps. Strangely enough, the plainest and most forcible exposition of this plan was made by an emigrant in London, a certain Dutheil, for the benefit of England and Austria. But the Allies were deaf to his warnings, while in the mean time Bonaparte enforced the same idea upon the French authorities, and secured their acceptance of it. Both he and they were the more inclined to the scheme because once already it had been successfully initiated, because the general, having studied Italy and its people, thoroughly understood what contributions might be levied on them, because the Army of the Rhine was radically republican and knew its own strength, because therefore the personal ambitions of Bonaparte, and in fact the very existence of the Directory, alike depended on success elsewhere than in central Europe.

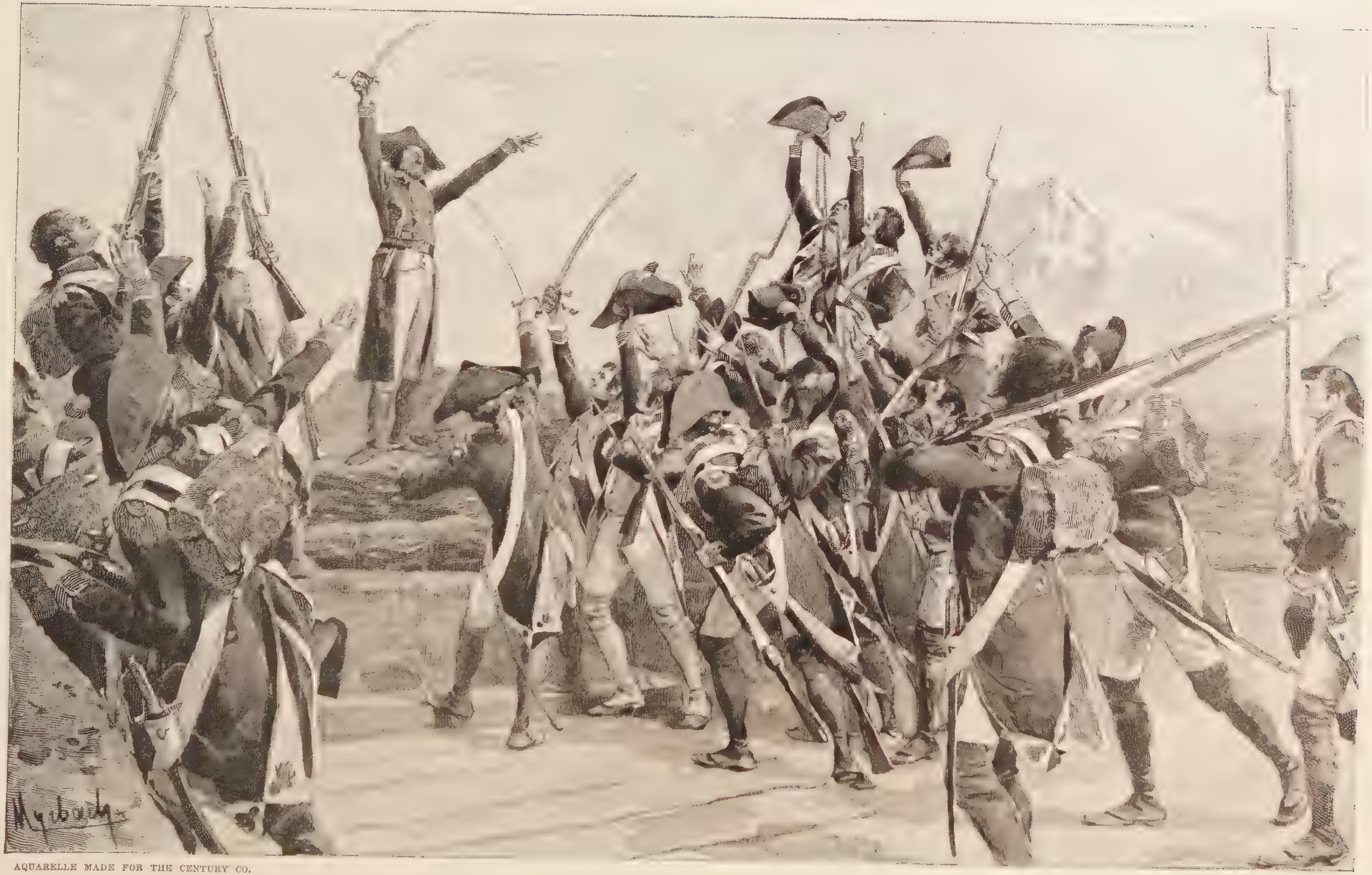
Having been for centuries the battle-field of rival dynasties, Italy, though a geographical unit with natural frontiers more marked than those of any other land, and with inhabitants fairly homogeneous in birth, speech, and institutions, was neither a nation nor a family of kindred nations, but a congeries of heterogeneous states. Some of these, like Venice and Genoa, boasted the proud title of republics; they were in reality narrow, commercial, even piratical oligarchies, destitute of any vigorous political life. The Pope, like other petty rulers, was but a temporal prince, despotic, and not even enlightened, as was the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Naples and the Milanese both groaned under the yoke of foreign rulers, and the only passable government in the length and breadth of the land was that of the house of Savoy in Piedmont and Sardinia, lands where the revolutionary spirit of liberty was most extended and active. The petty courts, like those of Parma and Modena, were nests of intrigue and corruption. There was, of course, in every place that saving remnant of high-minded men which is always providentially left as a seed; but the people as a whole were ignorant and enervated. The accumulations of ages, gained by an extensive and lucrative commerce, or by the tilling of a generous soil. had not been altogether dissipated by misrule, and there was even yet rich store of money in many of the venerable and still splendid cities. Nowhere in the ancient seats of the Roman commonwealth, whose memory was now the cherished fashion in France, could anything more than a reflection of French revolutionary principles be discerned; the rights of man and republican doctrine were attractive subjects of debate in many cities throughout the peninsula, but there was little of that fierce devotion to their realization so prevalent beyond the Alps.

The sagacity of Bonaparte saw his account in these conditions. Being a professed republican, he could announce himself as the regenerator of society, and the liberator of a people. If, as has been supposed, he already dreamed of a throne, where could one be so easily founded with the certainty of its endurance? As a conqueror he would have a divided, helpless, and wealthy people at his feet. If the old flame of Corsican ambition were not yet extinguished, he felt perhaps that he could wreak the vengeance of a defeated and angry people upon Genoa, their oppressor for ages.

His preparations began as early as the autumn of 1795, when, with Carnot's assistance, the united Pyrenean and Italian armies were directed to the old task of opening the roads through the mountains and by the sea-shore into Lombardy and central Italy. They won the battle of Loano, which secured the Maritime Alps once more; but a long winter amid these inclement peaks had left the army wretched and destitute of every necessity. It had been difficult throughout that winter to maintain even the Army of the Interior in the heart of France; the only chance for that of Italy was movement. A completed plan of action was forwarded from Paris in January. But Schérer, the commanding general, and his staff were outraged, refusing to consider its suggestions, either those for supplying their necessities in Lombardy, or those for the daring and venturesome operations necessary to reach that goal.

Bonaparte, who could invent such schemes, alone could realize them; and the task was intrusted to him. For the next ten weeks no sort of preparation was neglected. The nearly empty chest of the Directory was swept clean; from that source the new commander received forty-seven thousand five hundred francs in cash, and drafts for twenty thousand more; forced loans for considerable sums were made in Toulon and Marseilles; and Salicetti levied contributions of grain and forage in Genoa according to the plan which had been preconcerted between him and the general in their Jacobin days. The army which Bonaparte finally set in motion was therefore a fine engine of war. Its immediate necessities relieved, the veterans warmed to their work, and that notable promise of booty worked them to the pitch of genuine enthusiasm. The young commander, moreover, was as circumspect as a man of the first ability alone could be when about to make the venture of his life and play for the stake of a world. His generals of division were themselves men of mark—personages no less than Masséna, Augereau, Laharpe, and Sérurier. But what the commander-in-chief had to do was done with such smoothness and skill that even they could find no ground for carping; and though at first cold and reticent, before long they yielded to the influences which filled with excitement the very air they breathed.

At this moment, besides the National Guard, France had an army and navy the effective fighting force of which numbered upward of half a million. Divided into nine armies instead of fourteen as first planned, there were in reality but seven; of these, four were of minor importance: a small, skeleton Army of the Interior, a force in the



AQUARELLE MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

RAMPON'S SOLDIERS TAKING THE OATH NEVER TO SURRENDER

FROM THE AQUARELLE BY F. DE MYRBACH

Rampon, with 1500 soldiers, was charged with the defense of a redoubt at Montenotte, which was attacked by an Austrian corps. He made his soldiers swear to perish rather than surrender, and repulsed three attacks of the Austrians, who were overwhelmed on the following day by superior forces

West under Hoche twice as large and with ranks better filled, a fairly strong army in the North under Macdonald, and a similar one in the Alps under Kellermann, with Berthier and Vaubois as lieutenants, which soon became a part of Bonaparte's force. These were, if possible, to preserve internal order and to watch England, while three great active organizations were to combine for the overthrow of Austria. On the Rhine were two of the active armies—one near Düsseldorf under Jourdan, another near Strasburg under Moreau. At the portals of Italy was Bonaparte, with a third, soon to be the most active of all. At the outset he had, all told, about forty-five thousand men; but the campaign which he conducted had before its close assumed such dimensions that in spite of its losses the Army of Italy contained nearly double that number of men ready for the field, besides the garrison troops and invalids. The figures on the records of the war department were invariably much greater; but an enormous percentage, sometimes as high as a third, was always in the hospitals, while often as many as twenty thousand were left behind to hold various fortresses. Bonaparte, for evident reasons, uniformly represented his effective as smaller than it was, and stunned the ears of the Directory with ever reiterated demands for reinforcement. A dispassionate estimate would fix the number of his troops in the field at any one time during these operations as not lower than thirty-five thousand nor much higher than eighty thousand.

Another element of the utmost importance entered into the coming campaign. The old vicious system by which a vigilant democracy had jealously prescribed to its generals every step to be taken was swept away by Bonaparte, who as Robespierre's "man" had been thoroughly familiar with its workings from the other end. He was now commander-in-chief, and he insisted on the absolute unity of command as essential to the economy of time. This being granted, his equipment was complete. It will be remembered that in 1794 he had explained to his patrons how warfare in the field was like a siege: by directing all one's force to a single point a breach might be made, and the equilibrium of opposition destroyed. To this conception of concentration for attack he had, in concert with the Directory, added another, that of expansion in a given territory for sustenance. He had still a third, that war must be made as intense and awful as possible in order to make it short, and thus to diminish its horrors. Trite and simple as these aphorisms now appear, they were all original and absolutely new, at least in the quick, fierce application of them made by Bonaparte. The traditions of chivalry, the incessant warfare of two centuries and a half, the humane conceptions of the Church, the regard for human life, the difficulty of communications, the scarcity of munitions and arms,—all these and other elements had combined to make war under mediocre generals a stately ceremonial, and to diminish the number of actual battles, which took place, when they did, only after careful preparation, as an unpleasant necessity, by a sort of common agreement, and with the ceremony of a duel.

Turenne, Marlborough, and Frederick, all men of cold-blooded temperament, had been the greatest generals of their respective ages, and were successful much in proportion to their lack of sentiment and disregard of conventionalities. Their notions and their conduct displayed the same instincts as those of Bonaparte, and their minds were enlarged by a study of great campaigns like that which had fed his inchoate genius and had made possible his consummate achievement. He had much the same apparatus for warfare as they. The men of Europe had not materially changed in stature, weight, education, or morals since the closing years ot the Thirty Years' War. The roads were somewhat better, the conformation of mountains, hills, and valleys was better known, and like his great predecessors, though unlike his contemporaries, Bonaparte knew the use of a map; but in the main little was changed in the conditions for moving and manœuvering troops. News traveled slowly, for the fastest couriers rode from Nice to Paris or from Paris to Berlin in seven days. Muskets and small firearms of every description were little improved. Prussia actually claimed that she had been forced to negotiate for peace because France controlled the production of gun-flints. There had been some improvement in the forging of cannon, and the artillery arm was on the whole more efficient. In France there had been considerable change for the better in the manual and in tactics; the rest of Europe followed the old and more formal ways. Outside the republic, ceremony still held sway in court and camp; youthful energy was stifled in routine; and the generals opposed to Bonaparte were for the most part men advanced in years, wedded to tradition, and incapable of quickly adapting their ideas to meet advances and attacks based on conceptions radically different from their own. It was at times a positive misery to the new conqueror that his opponents were such inefficient fossils. Young and at the same time capable; using the natural advantages of his territory to support the bravery of his troops; with a mind which was not only accurate and decisive, but comprehensive in its observations; unhampered by control or by principle; opposed to generals who could not think of a boy of twenty-six as their equal; with the best army and the finest theater of war in Europe; finally, with a genius independently developed, and with conceptions of his profession which summarized the experience of his greatest predecessors, Bonaparte performed feats that seemed miraculous even when compared with those of Hoche, Jourdan, or Moreau, which had already so astounded the world.

Within eleven days the Austrians and Sardinians were separated, the latter having been defeated and forced to sign an armistice. After a rest of two days, a fortnight saw him victorious in Lombardy, and entering Milan as a conqueror. Two weeks elapsed, and again he set forth to reduce to his sway in less than a month the most of central Italy. Against an enemy now desperate and at bay his operations fell into four divisions, each resulting in an advance—the first, of nine days, against Wurmser and Quasdanowich; the second, of sixteen days, against Wurmser; the third, of twelve days, against Alvinczy; and the fourth, of thirty days, until he captured Mantua and opened the mountain passes to his army. Within fifteen days after beginning hostilities against the Pope, he forced him to sign the treaty of Tolentino; and within thirty-six days of their setting foot on the road from Mantua to Vienna, the French were at Leoben, distant only ninety miles from the Austrian capital, and dictating terms to the empire. In the year between March twenty-seventh, 1796, and April seventh, 1797, Bonaparte humbled the most haughty dynasty in Europe, toppled the central European state system, and initiated the process which has given a predominance apparently final to Prussia, then considered but as a parvenu.

It is impossible to estimate the enormous sums of money which he exacted for the conduct of a war that he chose to say was carried on to emancipate Italy. The soldiers of his army were well dressed, well fed, and well equipped from the day of their entry into Milan; the arrears of their pay were not only settled, but they were given license to prey on the country until a point was reached which seemed to jeopardize success, when common pillage was promptly stopped by the severest examples. The treasury of the Directory was not filled as were those of the conquering officers, but it was no longer empty. In short, France reached the apex of her revolutionary greatness; and as she was now the foremost power on the Continent, the shaky monarchies in neighboring lands were forced to consider again questions which in 1795 they had hoped were settled. As Bonaparte foresaw, the destinies of Europe had indeed hung on the fate of Italy.

Europe had grown accustomed to military surprises in the few preceding years. The armies of the French republic, fired by devotion to their principles and their nation, had accomplished marvels. But nothing in the least foreshadowing this had been wrought even by them. Then, as now, curiosity was inflamed, and the most careful study was expended in analyzing the process by which such miracles had been performed. The investigators and their readers were so overpowered by the spectacle and its results that they were prevented by a sort of awe-stricken credulity from recognizing the truth; and even yet the notion of a supernatural influence fighting on Bonaparte's side has not entirely disappeared. But the facts as we know them reveal cleverness dealing with incapacity, energy such as had not yet been seen fighting with languor, an embodied principle of great vitality warring with a lifeless, vanishing system. The consequences were startling, but logical; the details sound like a romance from the land of Eblis.

CHAPTER XXVI

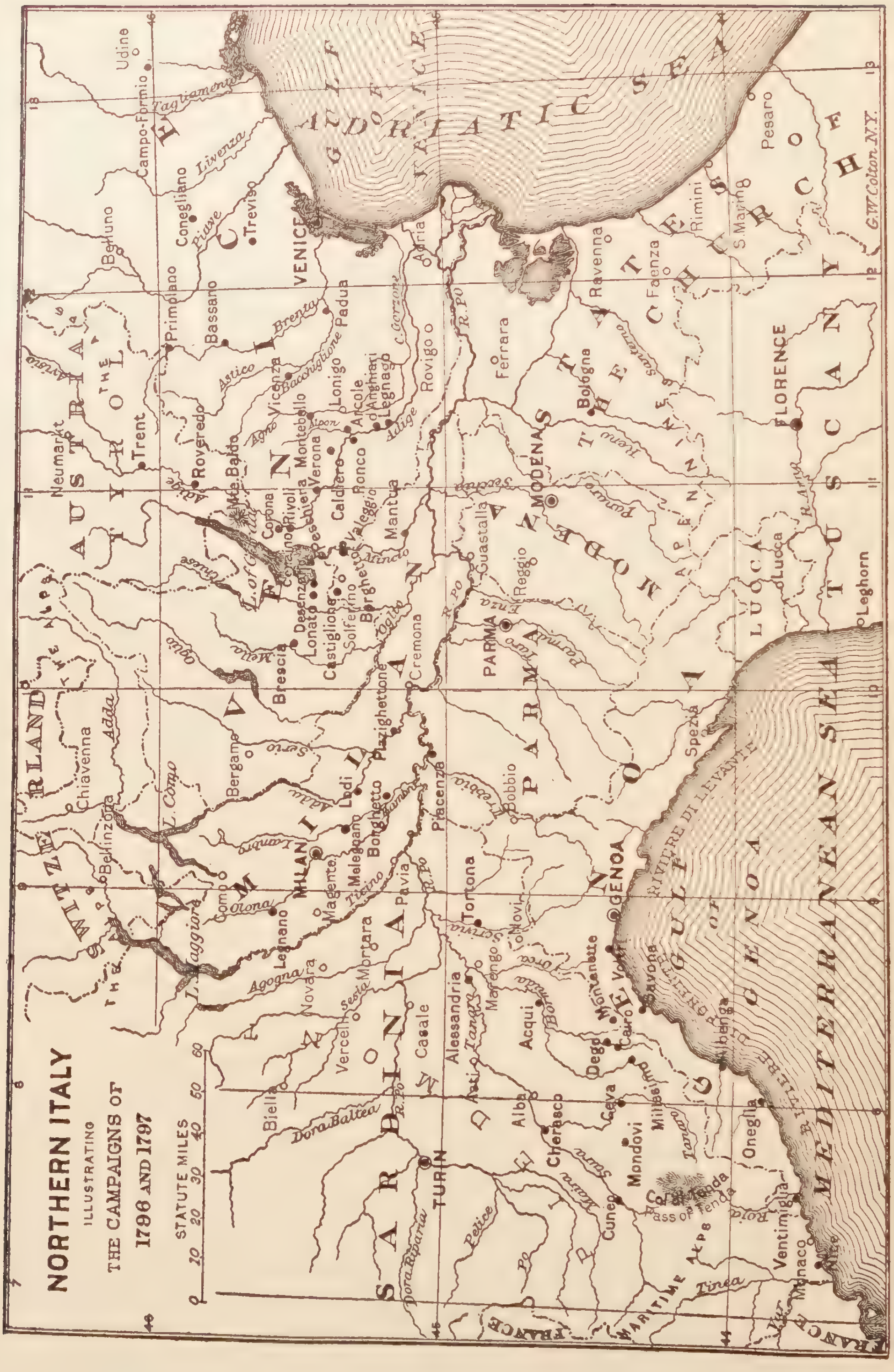
THE CONQUEST OF PIEDMONT AND THE MILANESE

The Armies of Austria and Sardinia—Montenotte and Millesimo—Mondovi and Cherasco—Consequences of the Campaign—The Plains of Lombardy—The Crossing of the Po—Advance toward Milan—Lodi—Retreat of the Austrians—Moral Effects of Lodi.

Chap. XXVI
1796

VICTOR AMADEUS of Sardinia was not unaccustomed to the loss of territory in the north, because from immemorial times his house had relinquished picturesque but unfruitful lands beyond the Alps to gain fertile fields below them. It was a hard blow, to be sure, that Savoy, which gave name to his family, and Nice, with its beautiful and commanding site, should have been lost to his crown. But so far, in every general European convulsion some substantial morsels had fallen to the lot of his predecessors, who had looked on Italy "as an artichoke to be eaten leaf by leaf"; and it was probable that a slice of Lombardy would be his own prize at the next pacification. He had spent his reign in strengthening his army, and as the foremost military power in Italy his young and vigorous people, with the help of Austria, were defending the passes into their territory. The road from their capital to Savona on the sea wound by Ceva and Millesimo over the main ridge of the Apennines, at the summit of which it was joined by the highway through Dego and Cairo leading southwestward from Milan through Alessandria. The Piedmontese, under Colli, were guarding the approach to their own capital; the Austrians, under Beaulieu, that to Milan. Collectively their numbers were about equal to those of the French; but the two armies were separated.

Beaulieu began operations on April tenth by ordering an attack on the French division of Laharpe, which had been thrown forward to



NORTHERN ITALY
ILLUSTRATING
THE CAMPAIGNS OF
1796 AND 1797

STATUTE MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
G.W. Colton, N.Y.
SWITZERLAND
AUSTRIA
TYROL
VENICE
ADRIATIC SEA
GULF OF VENICE
MILAN
SARDINIA
PARMA
MODENA
STATES OF THE CHURCH
LUCCA
TUSCANY
GENOA
GULF OF GENOA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
RIVIERE DI LEVANTE
RIVIERE DI PONENTE
APENNINES
MARITIME ALPS
FRANCE
Udine
Campo-Formio
Tagliamento
Liwenza
Conegliano
Piave
Treviso
Belluno
Primolano
Bassano
Brenta
Padua
Vicenza
Bacchiglione
Astico
Lonigo
Arcole
Anghiari
Legnago
C. Gorzone
Adria
Rovigo
R. Po
Ferrara
Ravenna
Faenza
Rimini
S. Marino
Pesaro
Bologna
Reno
Florence
R. Arno
Leghorn
Lucca
Neumarkt
Trent
Roveredo
Adige
Mte. Baldo
Montebello
Verona
Caldiero
Ronco
Corona
Rivoli
Peschiera
Valeggio
Mantua
Mincio
L. of Garda
Desenzano
Lonato
Castiglione
Solferino
Borghetto
Oglio
Brescia
Mella
Chiese
Cremona
Guastalla
Secchia
Modena
Reggio
Enza
Parma
Taro
Bergamo
Serio
Adda
Lodi
Pizzighettone
Piacenza
Trebbia
Bobbio
Chiavenna
L. Como
Lambro
Bellinzona
Como
Olona
Legnano
Magenta
Melegnano
Borghetto
Pavia
Ticino
L. Maggiore
Agogna
Novara
Mortara
Sesia
Vercelli
Biella
Dora Baltea
Casale
Alessandria
Tanaro
Marengo
Tortona
Scrivia
Novi
Orba
Bormida
Acqui
Montenotte
Voltri
Savona
Dego
Cairo
Millesimo
Ceva
Asti
Alba
Cherasco
Mondovi
Stura
Cuneo
Col di Tenda
Pass of Tenda
Albenga
Oneglia
Ventimiglia
Roja
Monaco
Nice
Var
Tinea
Turin
Dora Riparia
Pelice
Po
Spezia
Genoa

Voltri. The Austrians under Argenteau were to fall on its rear from Montenotte, a village to the north of Savona, with the idea of driving that wing of Bonaparte's army back along the shore road, on which it was hoped they would fall under the fire of Nelson's guns. Laharpe, however, retreated to Savona in perfect safety, for the English fleet was not near. Thereupon Bonaparte, suddenly revealing the new formation of his army in the north and south line, assumed the offensive. Argenteau, having been held temporarily in check by the desperate resistance of a handful of French soldiers under Colonel Rampon, was surprised and overwhelmed at Montenotte on the twelfth by a force much larger than his own. Next day Masséna and Augereau drove back toward Dego an Austrian division which had reached Millesimo on its way to join Colli; and on the fifteenth, at that place, Bonaparte himself destroyed the remnant of Argenteau's corps. On the sixteenth Beaulieu abandoned the mountains to make a stand at Acqui in the plain. Thus the whole Austrian force was not only driven back, but was entirely separated from the Piedmontese.

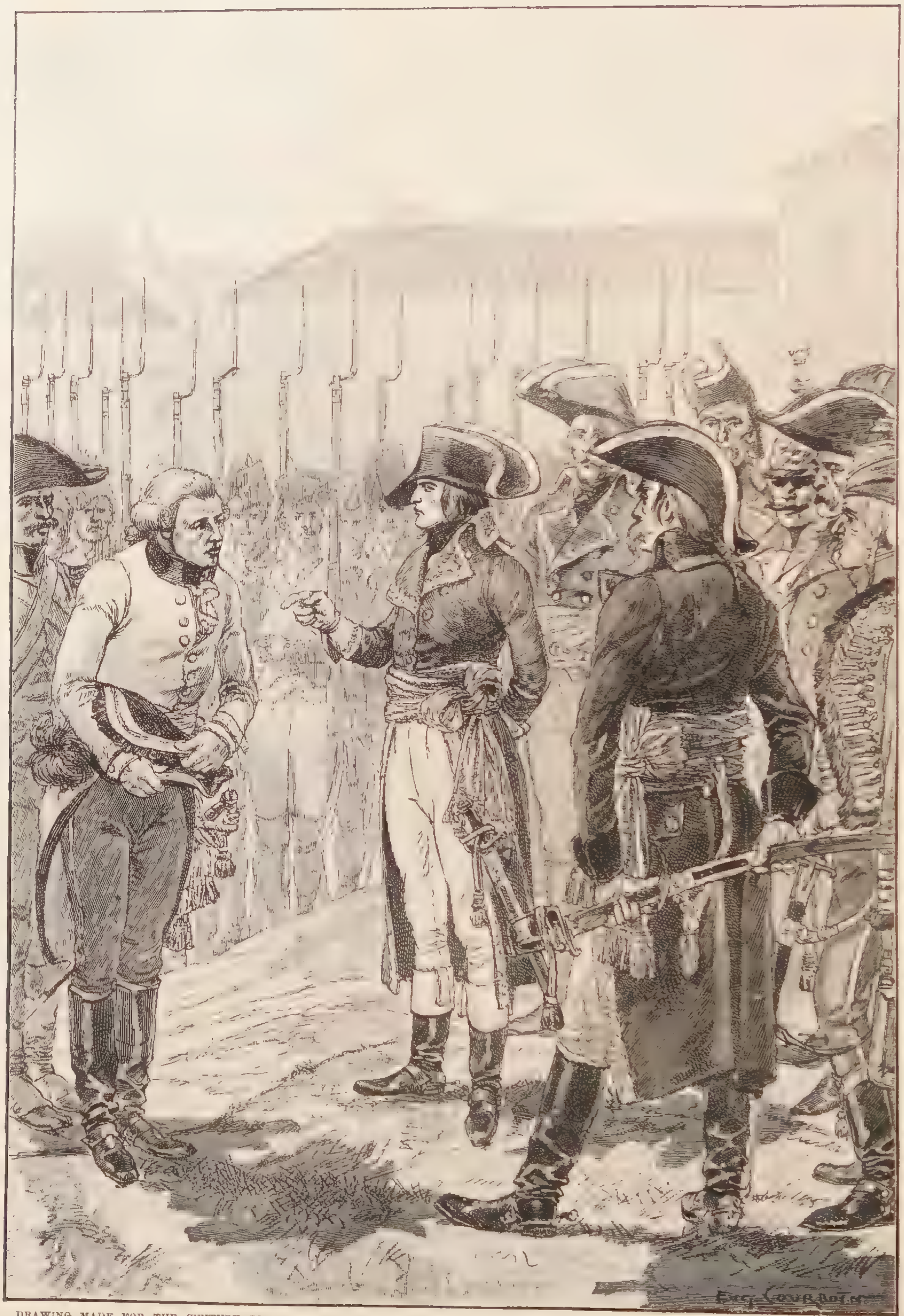
Bonaparte had a foolish plan in his pocket, which had been furnished by the Directory in a temporary reversion to official tradition, ordering him to advance into Lombardy, leaving behind the hostile Piedmontese on his left, and the uncertain Genoese on his right. He disregarded it, apparently without hesitation, and throwing his force northwestward toward Ceva, where the Piedmontese were posted, terrified them into a retreat. They were overtaken, however, at Mondovi on April twenty-second, and utterly routed, losing not only their best troops, but their field-pieces and baggage-train. Three days later Bonaparte pushed onward and occupied Cherasco, which was distant from Turin, the Piedmontese capital, but twenty-five miles by a short, easy, and now open road. On the twenty-seventh the Sardinians, isolated in a mountain amphitheater, and with no prospect of relief from their discomfited ally, made overtures for an armistice preliminary to peace. These were readily accepted by Bonaparte, without a thought of possible displeasure on the part of the French government; and although he had no authorization from them to perform such functions, he was defiantly careless of instructions in this as in every subsequent step he took. The negotiation — during which the French stipulated for the surrender to them of Coni and Tortona, the famous "keys of the Alps," with other strongholds of minor importance, demanding also the right to cross and recross Piedmontese territory at will—was completed on the twenty-eighth. Victor Amadeus being checkmated, Bonaparte was free to deal with Beaulieu.

This short campaign was in some respects insignificant, especially when compared as to numbers and results with what was to follow. But the names of Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego, Mondovi, and Cherasco were ever dear to Bonaparte, and stand in a high place on his greatest monument. The King of Sardinia was the father-in-law of Louis XVIII., and his court had been a nest of plotting emigrants. The loss of his fortresses robbed him of his power. By the terms of the treaty he was to banish the French royalists from his lands. Stripped thus of both force and prestige, he did not long survive the disgrace, and died, leaving to Charles Emmanuel, his son, no real dominion but that over the island of Sardinia. Moreover, for Bonaparte, a military and political aspirant in his first independence, everything, absolutely everything, was at stake in those earliest engagements; on the event hung his career. They passed, those spring days, like a transformation scene. Success was in the air, not the success of accident, but the resultant of forethought and careful combination. The generals, infected by their leader's spirit, vied with each other in daring and gallantry. For happy desperation Rampon's famous stand remains unsurpassed in the annals of war.

From the heights of Ceva the leader of conquering and now devoted soldiers could show to them and their equally enthusiastic officers the fertile and well-watered land into which he had promised to lead them, the historic fields of Lombardy. Nothing comparable to that inexhaustible storehouse of nature can be found in France, generous as is her soil. Walled in on the north and west by the majestic masses of the Alps, and to the south by the smaller but still mighty bastions of the Apennines, these plains owe to the mountains not only their fertility and prosperity, but their very existence. Numberless rills which rise amid the icy summits of the great chain, or the lower peaks of the minor one, combine into ever growing streams of pleasant waters which finally unite in the sluggish but impressive Po. Melting snows and torrential rains fill these watercourses with the rich detritus of the hills, which renews from year to year the soil it originally created. A genial climate and a grateful soil return to the industrious inhabitants an ample reward for their labors. In the fiercest heats of summer the passing traveler will hear if he pauses the soft sounds of slow-running waters in the irrigation sluices which on every side supply any lack of rain. Wheat, barley, and rice, maize, fruit, and wine, are but a few of the staples. Great farmsteads, with barns whose mighty lofts and groaning mows attest the importance of Lombard agriculture, are grouped into the hamlets which abound at the shortest intervals. And to the vision of one who sees them first from a mountain-top through the dim haze of a sunny day, towns and cities seem strewn as if they were grain from the hand of a sower. The measure of bewilderment is full when memory recalls that this garden of Italy has been the prize for which from remotest antiquity the nations of Europe have fought, and that the record of the ages is indelibly written in the walls and ornaments of the myriad structures—theaters, palaces, and churches—which lie so quietly below. Surely the dullest sansculotte in Bonaparte's army must have been aroused to new sensations by the sight. What rosy visions took shape in the mind of their leader we can only imagine.

Piedmont having submitted, the promised descent into these rich plains was not an instant deferred. "Hannibal," said the commanding general to his staff, "took the Alps by storm. We have turned their flank." Pausing only to announce his feats to the Directory in modest phrase, and to recommend for preferment those who, like Lannes and Lanusse, had earned distinction, he set forth on May thirtieth. Neither Genoa, Tuscany, nor Venice was to be given time for arming; Beaulieu must be met while his men were still dispirited, and before the arrival of reinforcements: for a great army of thirty thousand men was immediately to be despatched under Wurmser to maintain the power of Austria in Italy. Beaulieu was a typical Austrian general, seventy-one years old, but still hale, a stickler for precedent, and looking to experience as his only guide. Relying on the principles of strategy as he had learned them, he had taken up what he considered a strong position for the defense of Milan, his line stretching northeasterly beyond the Ticino from Valenza, the spot where rumors, diligently spread by Bonaparte, declared that the French would attempt to force a passage. Confirmed in his own judgment by these reports, the old and wary Austrian commander stood brave and expectant, while the young and daring adventurer opposed to him marched swiftly by on the right bank fifty miles onward to Piacenza, and made his crossing on May seventh in common ferry-boats and by a pontoon bridge, meeting with little or no resistance from the few Austrian cavalry who had been sent out merely to reconnoiter the line. The outwitted army was virtually outflanked, and in the greatest danger. Beaulieu had barely time to break camp and march in hot haste northeasterly to Lodi, where, behind the swift current of the Adda, he made a final stand for the defense of Milan, the seat of Austrian government. In fact, his movements were so hurried that the advance-guards of both armies met by accident at Fombio on May eighth, where a sharp engagement resulted in a victory for the French. Laharpe, who had shown his usual courage in this fight, was killed a few hours later, through a mistake of his own soldiers, in a mêlée with the pickets of a second Austrian corps. On the ninth the dukes of Parma and of Piacenza both made their submission in treaties dictated by the French commander, and simultaneously the reigning archduke quitted Milan. Next day the pursuing army was at Lodi.

Bonaparte wrote to the Directory that he had expected the passage of the Po would prove the most bold and difficult manœuver of the campaign. But it was no sooner accomplished than he again showed a perfect mastery of his art by so manœuvering as to avoid an engagement while the great river was still immediately in his rear. He was then summoned to meet a third emergency of equal consequence. The Adda is fordable in some places at certain times, but not easily; and at Lodi a wooden bridge about two hundred yards in length then occupied the site of the present solid structure of masonry and iron. The approach to this bridge Beaulieu had seized and fortified. Northwestward was Milan; to the east lay the almost impregnable fortress of Mantua. Beaten at Lodi, the Austrians might still retreat, and make a stand under the walls of either town with some hope of victory: it was Bonaparte's intention so to disorganize his enemy's army that neither would be possible. Accordingly on May tenth the French forces were concentrated for the advance. They started immediately and marched so swiftly that they overtook the Austrian rear-guard before it could withdraw behind the old Gothic walls of the town, and close the gates. Driving them onward, the French fought as they marched. A decisive conflict cleared the streets; and after a stubborn resistance the brave defenders retreated over the bridge to the eastern bank of what was now their last rampart, the river. With cool and desperate courage



DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

ENGRAVED BY J. W. EVANS

BONAPARTE, SURPRISED AT LONATO WITH HIS STAFF AND 1200 MEN, COMPELS 4000 AUSTRIANS TO SURRENDER

FROM THE DRAWING BY EUGÈNE COURBOIN

Beaulieu then brought into action the Austrian artillery, and swept the wooden roadway.

In a short time the bridge would no doubt have been in flames; it was uncertain whether the shifting and gravelly bottom of the stream above or below would either yield a ford or permit a crossing by any other means. Under Bonaparte's personal supervision, and therefore with miraculous speed, the French batteries were placed and began an answering thunder. In an access of personal zeal, the commander even threw himself for an instant into the whirling hail of shot and shrapnel, in order the better to aim two guns which in the hurry had been misdirected. Under this terrible fire and counterfire it was impossible for the Austrians to apply a torch to any portion of the structure. Behind the French guns were three thousand grenadiers waiting for a signal. Soon the crisis came. A troop of Bonaparte's cavalry had found the nearest ford a few hundred yards above the bridge, and were seen, amid the smoke, turning the right flank of the Austrian infantry, which had been posted a safe distance behind the artillery on the opposite shore. Quick as thought, in the very nick of opportunity, the general issued his command, and the grenadiers dashed for the bridge. Eye-witnesses declared that the fire of the Austrian artillery was now redoubled, while from houses on the opposite side soldiers hitherto concealed poured volley after volley of musket-balls upon the advancing column. For one single fateful moment it faltered. Berthier and Masséna, with others equally devoted, rushed to its head and rallied the lines. In a few moments the deed was accomplished, the bridge was won, the batteries were silenced, and the enemy was in full retreat.

Scattered, stunned, and terrified, the disheartened Austrians felt that no human power could prevail against such a foe. Beaulieu could make no further stand behind the Adda; but, retreating beyond the Oglio to the Mincio, a parallel tributary of the Po, he violated Venetian neutrality by seizing Peschiera, at the head of that stream, and spread his line behind the river from the Venetian town on the north as far as Mantua, the farthest southern outpost of Austria, thus thwarting one, and that not the least important, of Bonaparte's plans. As to the Italians, they seemed bereft of sense, and for the most part yielded dumbly to what was required. There were occasional outbursts of resistance to the fierce policy of levying contributions. One was threatened in Milan itself, but they were all put down with a high hand. Pavia, which rebelled outright, and unbolted its gates only under compulsion, was delivered to the soldiery as their booty.

The moral effect of the action at Lodi was incalculable. Bonaparte's reputation as a strategist had already been established, but his personal courage had never been tested. The actual battle-field is something quite different from the great theater of war, and men wondered whether he had the same mastery of the former as of the latter. Hitherto he had been untried either as to his tactics or his intrepidity. In both respects Lodi elevated him literally to the stars. No doubt the risk he took was awful, and the loss of life terrible. Critics, too, have pointed out safer ways which they believe would have led to the same result; be that as it may, in no other way could the same dramatic effect have been produced. France went wild with joy. The peoples of Italy bowed before the prodigy which thus both paralyzed and fascinated them all. Austria was dispirited, and her armies were awe-stricken. When, five days later, amid silent but friendly throngs of wondering men, Bonaparte entered Milan as the liberator of Lombardy, at the head of his veteran columns, there was already about his brows a mild effulgence of supernatural light, which presaged to the growing band of his followers the full glory in which he was later to shine on the imagination of millions. It was after Lodi that his adoring soldiers gave him the name of "Little Corporal," by which they ever after knew him. He himself confessed that after Lodi some conception of his high destiny arose in his mind for the first time.

CHAPTER XXVII

AN INSUBORDINATE CONQUEROR AND DIPLOMATIST

BONAPARTE'S ASSERTION OF INDEPENDENCE—HELPLESSNESS OF THE DIRECTORY—THREATS AND PROCLAMATIONS—THE GENERAL AND HIS OFFICERS—BONAPARTE'S COMPREHENSIVE GENIUS—THE DEVOTION OF FRANCE—THE POSITION OF THE AUSTRIANS—BONAPARTE'S STRATEGY—HIS CONCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM IN ITALY—JUSTIFICATION OF HIS FORESIGHT—MODENA, PARMA, AND THE PAPACY—THE FRENCH RADICALS AND THE POPE—BONAPARTE'S POLICY—HIS AMBITION.

WHEN the news of the successes in Piedmont reached Paris, public festivals were decreed and celebrated; but the democratic spirit of the directors could brook neither the contemptuous disregard of their plan which Bonaparte had shown, nor his arrogant assumption of diplomatic plenipotence. Knowing how thoroughly their doctrine had permeated Piedmont, they had intended to make it a republic. It was exasperating, therefore, that through Bonaparte's meddling they found themselves still compelled to carry on negotiations with a monarchy. The treaty with the King of Sardinia was unwillingly signed by them on May fifteenth, but previous to the act they determined to clip the wings of their dangerous falcon. This they thought to accomplish by assigning Kellermann to share with Bonaparte the command of the victorious army, and by confirming Salicetti as their diplomatic plenipotentiary to accompany it. The news reached the conqueror at Lodi on the eve of his triumphant entry into Milan. "As things now are," he promptly replied to the Directory, "you must have a general who possesses your entire confidence. If I must refer every step to government commissioners, if they have the right to change my movements, to withdraw or send troops, expect nothing good hereafter." To Carnot he wrote at the same time: "I believe one bad general to be worth two good ones. . . . War is like government, a matter of tact. . . . I do not wish to be hampered. I have begun with some glory; I wish to continue worthy of you." Aware probably that his own republican virtue could not long withstand the temptations opening before him, he began the latter missive, as if to excuse himself and anticipate possible accusations: "I swear I have nothing in view but the country. You will always find me on the straight road. I owe to the republic the sacrifice of all my own notions. If people seek to set me wrong in your esteem, my answer is in my heart and in my conscience." It is of course needless to add that the Directory yielded, not only as to the unity of command, but also in the fatal and vital matter of intrusting all diplomatic negotiations to his hands.

In taking this last step the executive virtually surrendered its identity. Such, however, was the exultation of the Parisian populace and of the soldiery, that the degradation or even the forced resignation of the conquering dictator would have at once assured the fall of the directors. They could not even protest when, soon after, there came from Bonaparte a despatch announcing that the articles of "the glorious peace which you have concluded with the King of Sardinia" had reached "us," and significantly adding in a later paragraph that the troops were content, having received half their pay in coin. Voices in Paris declared that for such language the writer should be shot. Perhaps those who put the worst interpretation on the apparently harmless words were correct in their instinct. In reality the Directory had been wholly dependent on the army since the previous October; and while such an offensive insinuation of the fact would be, if intentional, most unpalatable, yet those who had profited by the fact dared not resent a remote reference to it.

The farce was continued for some time longer, Bonaparte playing his part with singular ability. He sent to Kellermann, in Savoy, without the form of transmitting it through government channels, a subsidy of one million two hundred thousand francs. As long as he was unhampered, his despatches to Paris were soldierly and straightforward, although after the passage of the Po they began to be somewhat bombastic, and to abound in his old-fashioned, curious, and sometimes incorrect classical or literary allusions. But if he were crossed in the least, if reinforcements did not arrive, or if there were any sign of independence in

Paris, they became petulant, talking of ill health, threatening resignation, and requesting that numbers of men be sent out to replace him in the multiform functions which in his single person he was performing. Of course these tirades often failed of immediate effect, but at least no effort was made to put an effective check on the writer's career. Read a century later in a cold and critical light, Bonaparte's proclamations of the same period seem stilted, jerky, and theatrical. In them, however, there may still be found a sort of interstitial sentimentality, and in an age of romantic devotion to ideals the quality of vague suggestiveness passed for genuine coin. Whatever else was lacking in those compositions, they had the one supreme merit of accomplishing their end, for they roused the French soldiers to frenzied enthusiasm.

In fact, if the Directory stood on the army, the army belonged henceforth to Bonaparte. On the very day that Milan was entered, Marmont heard from his leader's lips the memorable words, "Fortune is a woman; the more she does for me, the more I shall exact from her. . . . In our day no one has conceived anything great; it falls to me to give the example." This is the language that soldiers like to hear from their leader, and it was no doubt repeated throughout the army. "From this moment," wrote the same chronicler, a few months later, "the chief part of the pay and salaries was in coin. This led to a great change in the situation of the officers, and to a certain extent in their habits." Bonaparte was incorruptible. Salicetti announced one day that the brother of the Duke of Modena was waiting outside with four chests containing a million of francs in gold, and urged the general, as a friend and compatriot, to accept them. "Thank you," was the calm and significant answer, "I shall not put myself in the hands of the Duke of Modena for such a sum." But similar propositions were made by the commander-in-chief to his subordinates, and they with less prudence fell into the trap, taking all they could lay hands upon, and thus becoming the bond-slaves of their virtuous leader. There were stories at the time that some of the generals, not daring to send their ill-gotten money to France, and having no opportunity for investing it elsewhere, actually carried hundreds of thousands of francs in their baggage. This prostitution of his subordinates was part of a system. Twenty million francs was approximately the sum total of all contributions announced to the Directory, and in their destitution it seemed enormous. They also accepted with pleasure a hundred of the finest horses in Lombardy to replace, as Bonaparte wrote on sending his present, the ordinary ones which drew their carriages. Was this paltry four million dollars the whole of what was derived from the sequestrations of princely domains and the secularization of ecclesiastical estates? By no means. The army chest, of which none knew the contents but Bonaparte, was as inexhaustible as the widow's cruse. At the opening of the campaign in Piedmont, empty wagons had been ostentatiously displayed as representing the military funds at the commander's disposal: these same vehicles now groaned under a weight of treasure, and were kept in a safe obscurity. Well might he say, as he did in June to Miot, that the commissioners of the Directory would soon leave and not be replaced, since they counted for nothing in his policy.

With the entry into Milan, therefore, begins a new epoch in the remarkable development we are seeking to outline. The military genius of him who had been the Corsican patriot and the Jacobin republican had finally asserted dominion over all his other qualities. In the inconsistency of human nature, those former characters now and then showed themselves as still existent, but they were henceforth subordinate. The conquered Milanese was by a magical touch provided with a provisional government, ready, after the tardy assent of the Directory, to be changed into the Transpadane Republic and put under French protection. Every detail of administration, every official and his functions, came under Bonaparte's direction. He knew the land and its resources, the people and their capacities, the mutual relations of the surrounding states, and the idiosyncrasies of their rulers. Such laborious analysis as his despatches display, such grasp both of outline and detail, such absence of confusion and clearness of vision, such lack of hesitance and such definition of plan, seem to prove that either a hero or a demon is again on earth. All the capacity this man had hitherto shown, great as it was, sinks into insignificance when compared with the Olympian powers he now displays, and will continue to display for years to come. His sinews are iron, his nerves are steel, his eyes need no sleep, and his brain no rest. What a captured Hungarian veteran said of him at Lodi is as true of his political activity as of his military restlessness: "He knows nothing of the regular rules of war: he is sometimes on our front, sometimes on the flank, sometimes in the rear. There is no supporting such a gross violation of rules." His senses and his reason were indeed untrammeled by human limitations; they worked on front, rear, and flank, often simultaneously, and always without confusion.

Was it astonishing that the French nation, just recovering from a debauch of irreligion and anarchy, should begin insensibly to yield to the charms of a wooer so seductive? For some time past the soldiers, as the Milan newspapers declared, had been a pack of tatterdemalions ever flying before the arms of his Majesty the Emperor; now they were victors, led by a second Cæsar or Alexander, clothed, fed, and paid at the cost of the conquered. To ardent French republicans, and to the peoples of Italy, this phenomenal personage proclaimed that he had come to break the chains of captives, while almost in the same hour he wrote to the Directory that he was levying twenty million francs on the country, which, though exhausted by five years of war, was then the richest in the civilized universe. Nor was the self-esteem of France and the Parisian passion for adornment forgotten. There began a course of plunder, if not in a direction at least in a measure hitherto unknown to the modern world—the plunder of scientific specimens, of manuscripts, of pictures, statues, and other works of art. It is difficult to fix the responsibility for this policy. In the previous year a few art works had been taken from Holland and Belgium, and formal orders were given again and again by the Directory for stripping the Pope's galleries; but there is a persistent belief, founded, no doubt, in an inherent probability, that the whole scheme of art spoliation had been suggested in the first place by Bonaparte, and prearranged between himself and the executive before his departure. At any rate, he asked and easily obtained from the government a commission of scholars and experts to scour the Italian cities; and soon untold treasures of art, letters, and science began to pour into the galleries, cabinets, and libraries of Paris. A few brave voices among the artists of the capital protested against the desecration; the nation at large was tipsy with delight, and would not listen. Raphael, Leonardo, and Michelangelo, Correggio, Giorgione, and Paul Veronese, with all the lesser masters, were stowed in the holds of frigates and despatched by way of Toulon toward the new Rome; while Monge and Berthollet ransacked the scientific collections of Milan and Parma for their rarest specimens. Science, in fact, was to flourish on the banks of the Seine as never before or elsewhere; and the great investigators of Italy, forgetful of their native land, were to find a new citizenship in the world of knowledge at the capital of European liberties. Words like these, addressed to the astronomer Oriani, indicate that on Bonaparte's mind had dawned the notion of a universal federated state, to which national republics would be subordinate.

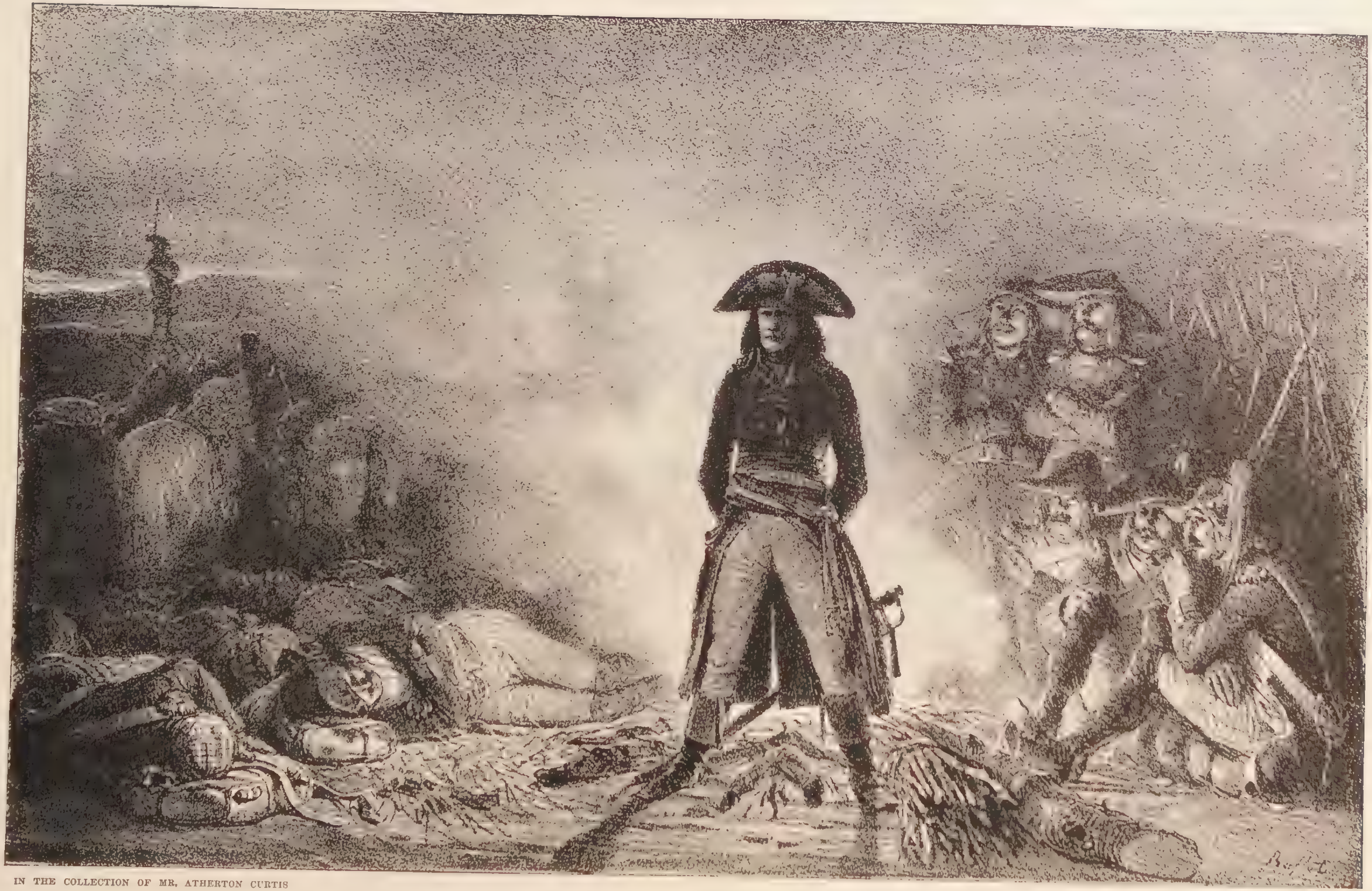
Italian rebellion having been subdued, the French nation roused to enthusiasm, independent funds provided, and the Directory put in its place, Bonaparte was free to unfold and consummate his further plans. Before him was the territory of Venice, a state once vigorous and terrible, but now, as far as the country populations were concerned, an enfeebled and gentle ruler. With quick decision a French corps of observation was sent to seize Brescia and watch the Tyrolean passes. It was, of course, to the advantage of Austria that Venetian neutrality should not be violated, except by her own troops. But the French, having made a bold beginning of formal defiance, were quick to go further. Beaulieu had not hesitated on false pretenses to seize Peschiera, another Venetian town, which, by its situation at the outlet of Lake Garda, was of the utmost strategic value. He now stood confronting his pursuers on a strong line established, without reference to territorial boundaries, behind the whole course of the Mincio. Such was the situation to the north and east of the French army. Southeastward, on the swampy banks of the same river, near its junction with the Po, was Mantua. This city, which even under ordinary circumstances was an almost impregnable fortress, had been strengthened by an extraordinary garrison, while the surrounding lowlands were artificially inundated as a supreme measure of safety.

Bonaparte intended to hurl Beaulieu back, and seize the line of the Adige, far stronger than that of the Mincio for repelling an Austrian invasion from the north. What to him was the neutrality of a weak government, and what were the precepts of international law with no force behind it but a moral one? Austria, according to treaty, had the right to move her troops over two great military roads within Venetian jurisdiction, and her defeated armies had just used one of them for retreat. The victorious commander could scarcely be expected to pause in his pursuit for lack of a few lines of writing on a piece of stamped paper. Accordingly, by a simple feint, the Austrians were led to believe that his object was the seizure of Peschiera and the passes above Lake Garda; consequently, defying international law and violating their treaties, they massed themselves at that place to meet his attack. Then with a swift, forced march the French were concentrated not on the enemy's strong right, but on his weak center at Borghetto. Bonaparte's cavalry, hitherto badly mounted and timid, but now reorganized, were thrown forward for their easy task. Under Murat's command they dashed through, and, encouraged by their own brilliant successes, were thenceforward famous for efficiency. Bonaparte, with the main army, then hurried past Mantua as it lay behind its bulwarks of swamp-fever, and the Austrian force was cut in two. The right wing fled to the mountains; the left was virtually in a trap. Without any declaration of war against Venice, the French immediately occupied Verona, and Legnago a few days later; Peschiera was fortified, and Pizzighettone occupied as Brescia had been, while contributions of every sort were levied more ruthlessly even than on the Milanese. The mastery of these new positions isolated Mantua more completely than a formal investment would have done; but it was, nevertheless, considered wise to leave no loophole, and a few weeks later an army of eight thousand Frenchmen sat down in force before its gates.

It was certain that within a short time a powerful Austrian force would pour out from the Alpine passes to the north. Further advance into Venetian lands would therefore be ruin for the French. There was nothing left but the slow hours of a siege, for Mantua had become the decisive point. In the heats of summer this interval might well have been devoted to ease; but it was almost the busiest period of Bonaparte's life. According to the Directory's rejected plan for a division of command in Italy, the mission assigned to Kellermann had been to organize republics in Piedmont and in the Milanese, and then to defend the Tyrolean passes against an Austrian advance from the north. Bonaparte was to have moved southward along the shore to revolutionize Genoa, Tuscany, the Papal States, and Naples successively. The whole idea having been scornfully rejected by Bonaparte, the Directory had been forced by the brilliant successes of their general not merely to condone his disobedience, but actually to approve his policy. He now had the opportunity of justifying his foresight. Understanding, as the government did not, that Austria was their only redoubtable foe by land, the real bulwark of the whole Italian system, he had first shattered her power, at least for the time. The prop having been removed, the structure was toppling, and during this interval of waiting, it fell. His opportunity was made, his resolution ripe.

In front, Venice was at his mercy; behind him, guerrilla bands of so-called Barbets, formed in Genoese territory and equipped by disaffected fugitives, were threatening the lately conquered gateway from France where the Ligurian Alps and the Apennines meet. Bonaparte's first step was to impose a new arrangement upon the submissive Piedmont, whereby, to make assurance double sure, Alessandria was added to the list of fortresses in French hands; then, as his second measure, Murat and Lannes appeared before Genoa at the head of an armed force, with instructions first to seize and shoot the many offenders who had taken refuge in her territory after the risings in Lombardy, and then to threaten the Senate with further retaliatory measures, and command the instant dismissal of the imperial Austrian plenipotentiary. From Paris came orders to drive the English fleet out of the harbor of Leghorn, where, in spite of the treaty between Tuscany and France, there still were hostile arsenals and ships. It was done. Naples did not wait to see her territories invaded, but sued for mercy and was humbled, being forced to withdraw her navy from that of the coalition, and her cavalry from the Austrian army. For the moment the city of Rome was left in peace. The strength of papal dominion lay in Bologna, and the other legations beyond the Apennines, comprising many of the finest districts in Italy; and there a master-stroke was to be made.

On the throne of Modena was an Austrian archduke: his government was remorselessly shattered and virtually destroyed, the ransom being fixed at the ruinous sum of ten million francs with twenty of the best pictures in the principality. But on that of Parma was a Spanish prince with whose house France had made one treaty and hoped to make a much better one. The duke, therefore, was graciously allowed to purchase an armistice by an enormous but yet possible contribution of two million francs in money, together with provisions and horses in quantity. The famous St. Jerome of Correggio was among the twenty paintings seized in Modena. The archduke repeatedly offered to ransom it for one million francs, the amount at which its value was estimated, but his request was not granted. Next came Bologna and its surrounding territory. Such had been the tyranny of ecclesiastical control that the subjects of the Pope in that most ancient and famous seat of learning welcomed the French with unfeigned joy; and the fairest portion of the Papal States passed by its own desire from under the old yoke. The successor of St. Peter was glad to ransom his capital by a



IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. ATHERTON CURTIS

BONAPARTE IN ITALY, 1796

FROM THE LITHOGRAPH BY RAFFET

payment nominally of twenty-one million francs. In reality he had to surrender far more; for his galleries, like those of Modena, were stripped of their gems, while the funds seized in government offices, and levied in irregular ways, raised the total value forwarded to Paris to nearly double the nominal contribution. All this, Bonaparte explained, was but a beginning, the idleness of summer heats. "This armistice," he wrote to Paris on June twenty-first, 1796, "being concluded with the dog-star rather than with the papal army, my opinion is that you should be in no haste to make peace, so that in September, if all goes well in Germany and northern Italy, we can take possession of Rome."

In fact, this ingenious man was really practising moderation, as both he and the terrified Italians, considering their relative situations, understood it. Whatever had been the original arrangement with the directors, there was nothing they did not now expect and demand from Italy: they wrote requiring, in addition to all that had hitherto been mentioned, plunder of every kind from Leghorn; masts, cordage, and ship supplies from Genoa; horses, provisions, and forage from Milan; and contributions of jewels and precious stones from the reigning princes. As for the papal power, the French radicals would gladly have destroyed it. They had not forgotten that a diplomatic agent of the republic had been killed in the streets of Rome, and that no reparation had been made either by the punishment of the assassin or otherwise. The Pope, they declared, had been the real author of the terrible civil war fomented by the unyielding clergy, and waged with such fury in France. Moreover, the whole sentimental and philosophical movement of the century in France and elsewhere considered the ecclesiastical centralization and hierarchical tyranny of the papacy as a dangerous survival of absolutism.

But Bonaparte was wise in his generation. The contributions he levied throughout Italy were terrible; but they were such as she could bear, and still recuperate for further service in the same direction. The liberalism of Italy was, moreover, not the radicalism of France; and a submissive papacy was of incalculably greater value both there and elsewhere in Europe than an irreconcilable and fugitive one. The Pope, too, though weakened and humiliated as a temporal prince, was spared for further usefulness to his conqueror as a spiritual dignitary. Beyond all this was the enormous moral influence of a temperate and apparently impersonal policy. Bonaparte, though personally and by nature a passionate and wilful man, felt bound, as the representative of a great movement, to exercise self-restraint, taking pains to live simply, dress plainly, almost shabbily, and continuing by calm calculation to refuse the enormous bribes which began and continued to be offered to him personally by the rulers of Italy. His generals and the fiscal agents of the nation were all in his power, because it was by his connivance that they had grown enormously rich, he himself remaining comparatively poor, and for his station almost destitute. The army was his devoted servant; Italy and the world should see how different was his moderation from the rapacity of the republic and its tools, vandals like the commissioners Gareau and Salicetti.

Such was the "leisure" of one who to all outward appearance was but a man, and a very ordinary one. In the medals struck to commemorate this first portion of the Italian campaign, he is still the same slim youth, with lanky hair, that he was on his arrival in Paris the year previous. It was observed, however, that the old indifferent manner was somewhat emphasized, and consequently artificial; that the gaze was at least as direct and the eye as penetrating as ever; and that there was, half intentionally, half unconsciously, disseminated all about an atmosphere of peremptory command—but that was all. The incarnation of ambition was long since complete; its attendant imperious manner was suffered to develop but slowly. In Bonaparte was perceptible, as Victor Hugo says, the shadowy outline of Napoleon.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MANTUA AND ARCOLE

THE AUSTRIAN SYSTEM — THE AUSTRIAN STRATEGY — CASTIGLIONE — FRENCH GAINS — BASSANO — THE FRENCH IN THE TYROL — THE FRENCH DEFEATED IN GERMANY — BONAPARTE AND ALVINCZY — AUSTRIAN SUCCESSES — CALDIERO — FIRST BATTLE OF ARCOLE — SECOND BATTLE OF ARCOLE.

MEANTIME the end of July had come. Wurmser, considered by Austria her greatest general, had been recalled to Vienna from the Rhine, and sent at the head of thirty thousand fresh troops to collect the columns of Beaulieu's army, which was scattered in the Tyrol. This done, he was to assume the chief command, and advance to the relief of Mantua. The first part of his task was successfully completed, and already, according to the direction of the Aulic Council of the empire, and in pursuance of the same hitherto universal but vicious system of cabinet campaigning which Bonaparte had just repudiated, he was moving down from the Alps in three columns with a total force of about fifty-three thousand men. There were about fifteen thousand in the garrison of Mantua. Bonaparte was much weaker, having only forty-two thousand, and of these some eight thousand were occupied in the siege of that place. Wurmser was a master of the old school, working like an automaton under the hand of his government, and commanding according to well-worn precept his well-equipped battalions, every soldier of which was a recruit so costly that destructive battles were made as infrequent as possible, because to fight many meant financial ruin. In consequence, like all the best generals of his class, he made war as far as possible a series of manœuvers. Opposed to him was an emancipated genius with neither directors nor public council to hamper him. In the tradition of the Revolution, as in the mind of Frederick the Great, war was no game, but a bloody decision, and the quicker the conclusion was tried the better. The national conscription, under the hands of Dubois de Crancé, had secured men in unlimited numbers at the least expense; while Carnot's organization had made possible the quick handling of troops in large mass by simplifying the machinery. Bonaparte was about to show what could be done in the way of using the weapon which had been put into his hands.

The possession of Mantua was decisive of Italian destiny, for its holder could command a kind of overlordship in every little Italian state. If Bonaparte should take and keep it, Austria would be virtually banished from Italy, and her prestige destroyed. She must, therefore, relieve it, or lose not only her power in the peninsula, but her rank in Europe. To this end, and according to the established rules of strategy, the Austrians advanced from the mountains in three divisions against the French line, which stretched from Brescia past Peschiera, at the head of the Mincio, and through Verona to Legnago on the Adige. Two of these armies were to march respectively down the east and west banks of Lake Garda, and, flanking the inferior forces of the French on both sides, surround and capture them. The other division was on the Adige in front of Verona, ready to relieve Mantua. Between that river and the lake rises the stately mass of Monte Baldo, abrupt on its eastern, more gentle on its western slope. This latter, as affording some space for manœuvers, was really the key to the passage. Such was the first onset of the Austrians down this line that the French outposts at Lonato and Rivoli were driven in, and for a time it seemed as if there would be a general rout. But the French stood firm, and checked any further advance. For a day Bonaparte and Wurmser stood confronting each other. In the mean time, however, the left Austrian column was pouring down toward Verona, while the right, under Quasdanowich, had already captured Brescia, seized the highway to Milan, and cut off the French retreat. This move in Wurmser's plan was so far entirely successful, and for a moment it seemed as if the sequel would be equally so. The situation of his opponents was desperate.

In this crisis occurred the first of those curious scenes which recur at intervals in Bonaparte's life. Some, and those eye-witnesses, have attributed them to genuine panic. Having ordered the siege of Mantua to be raised, and his own siege-guns to be spiked, he at once despatched the division thus rendered available for field operations toward Brescia. But its numbers were so few as scarcely to relieve the situation. Accordingly a council of war was summoned to decide whether the army should stand and fight, or retreat. The commander-in-chief was apparently much excited, and advised the latter course. The enemy being between the French and the Adda, no other line was open but that southward through the low country, over the Po; and to follow that implied something akin to a disorderly rout. Nevertheless, all the generals were in favor of this suggestion except one, Augereau, who disdained the notion of retreat on any line, and flung out of the room in scorn. Bonaparte walked the floor until late in the small hours; finally he appeared to have accepted Augereau's advice, and gave orders for battle. But the opening movements were badly executed. Bonaparte seemed to feel that the omens were unfavorable, and again the generals were summoned. Augereau opened the meeting with a theatrical and declamatory but earnest speech, encouraging his comrades and urging the expediency of a battle. This time it was Bonaparte who fled, apparently in despair, leaving the chief command, and with it the responsibility, to the daring Augereau, by whose enthusiasm, as he no doubt saw, the other generals had been affected. The hazardous enterprise succeeded, and on the very plan already adopted. Augereau gave the orders, and with swift concentration every available man was hurled against Quasdanowich at Lonato.

The result was an easy victory, the enemy was driven back to a safe distance, and Brescia was evacuated on August fourth, the defeated columns retreating behind Lake Garda to join Wurmser on the other side. Like the regular return of the pendulum, the French moved back again, and confronted the Austrian center that very night, but now with every company in line and Bonaparte at their head. A portion of the enemy, about twenty-five thousand in number, had reached Lonato, hastening to the support of Quasdanowich. Wurmser had lost a day before Mantua. A second time the hurrying French engaged their foe almost on the same field. A second time they were easily victorious. In fact so terrible was this second defeat that the scattered bands of Austrians wandered aimlessly about in ignorance of their way. One of them, four thousand strong, reaching Lonato, found it almost abandoned by the French, Bonaparte and his staff with but twelve hundred men being left behind. A herald, blindfolded, as was then the custom, was at once despatched to summon the French commander to surrender to the superior Austrian force. The available remnant of the victorious army quickly gathered, and the messenger was introduced in the midst of them. As the bandage was taken from his eyes, dazzled by the light falling on hundreds of brilliant uniforms, the imperious voice of his great enemy was heard commanding him to return and say to his leader that it was a personal insult to speak of surrender to the French army, and that it was he who must immediately yield himself and his division. The bold scheme was successful, and to the ten thousand previously killed, wounded, and captured by the conquerors four thousand prisoners were added. Next morning Wurmser advanced, and with his right resting on Lake Garda offered battle. The decisive fight occurred in the center of his long, weak line at Castiglione. Before evening the desperate struggle was over, and the Austrians were in full retreat toward the Tyrol. Had the great risks of these few days been determined against the French, who would have been to blame but the madcap Augereau? As things turned out, whose was the glory but Bonaparte's? This panic, at least, appears to have been carefully calculated and cleverly feigned. A week later the French lines were again closed before Mantua, which, though not invested, was at least blockaded. The fortress had been revictualed and regarrisoned, while the besiegers had been compelled to destroy their own train to prevent its capture by the enemy. But France was mistress of the Mincio and the Adige, with a total loss of about ten thousand men; while Austria had lost forty thousand, and was standing by a forlorn hope. Both armies were exhausted; as yet the great stake was not won.

In the shortest possible period new troops were under way both from Vienna and from Paris. With those from the Austrian capital came positive instructions to Wurmser that in any case he should again advance toward Mantua. In obedience to this command of the Emperor, a division of the army, twenty thousand strong, under Davidowich, was left in the Austrian Tyrol at Roveredo, near Trent, to stop the advance of the French, who, with their reinforcements, were pressing forward through the pass as if to join Moreau in Munich. The main Austrian army, under Wurmser, moved over into the valley of the Brenta, and advanced toward Mantua. If he should decide to turn westward against the French, the reserve could descend the valley of the

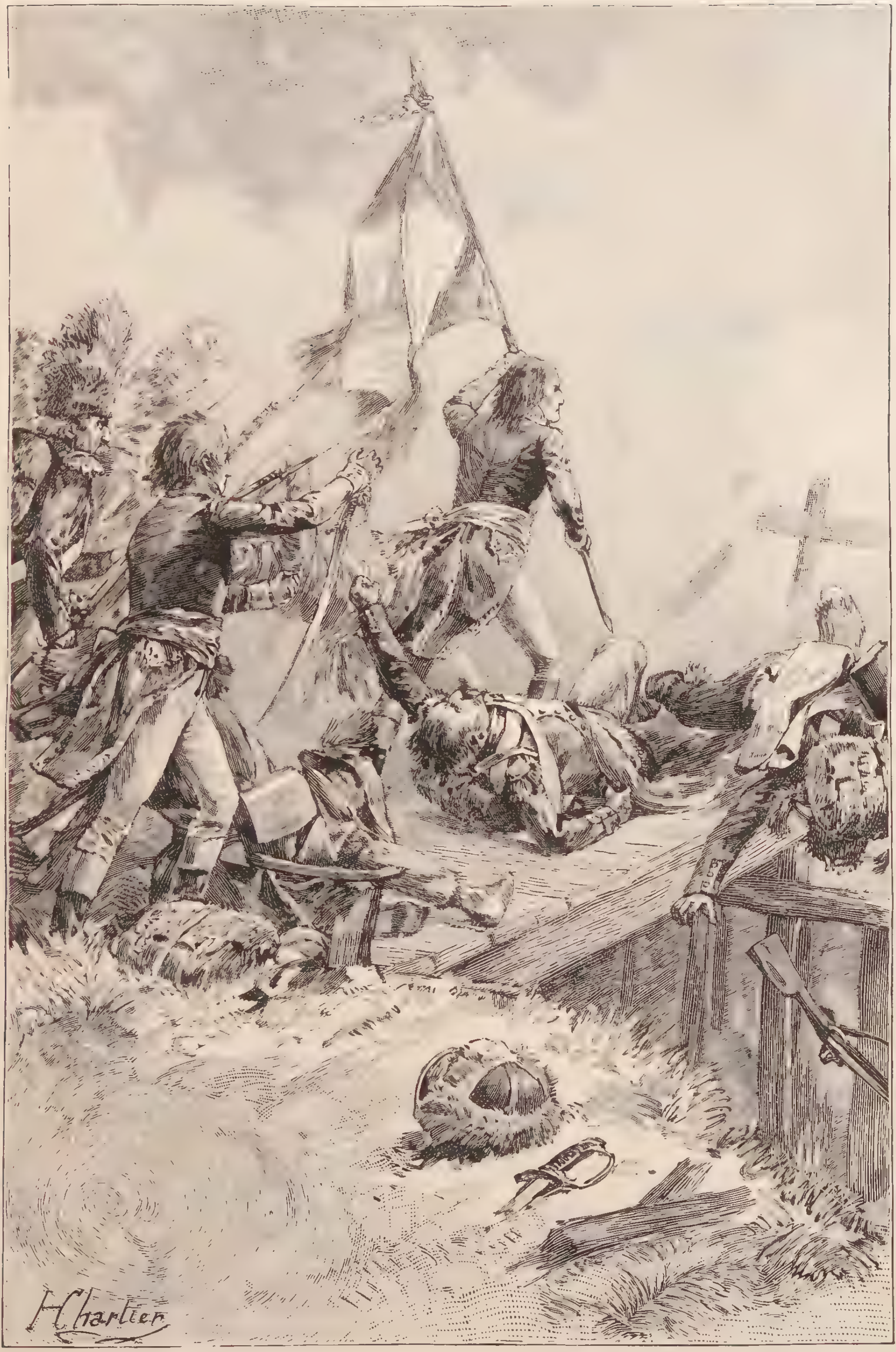
Adige to his assistance. But Bonaparte did not intend either to pass by and leave open the way southward, or to be shut up in the valleys of the Tyrol. With a quick surge Davidowich was first defeated at Roveredo, and then driven far behind Trent into the higher valleys. The victor delayed only to issue a proclamation giving autonomy to the Tyrolese, under French protection; but the ungrateful peasantry preferred the autonomy they already enjoyed, and fortified their precipitous passes for resistance. Turning quickly into the Brenta valley, Bonaparte, by a forced march of two days, overtook Wurmser's advance-guard unawares at Primolano, and captured it; the next day, September eighth, he cut in two and completely defeated the main army at Bassano. Part of those who escaped retreated into Friuli, toward Vienna. There was nothing left for the men under Wurmser's personal command but to throw themselves, if possible, into Mantua. With these, some sixteen thousand men in all, the veteran general forced a way, by a series of most brilliant movements, past the flank of the blockading French lines, and found a refuge in the famous fortress.

The lightning-like rapidity of these operations completed the demoralization of the Austrian troops. The fortified defiles and cliffs of the Tyrol fell before the French attacks as easily as their breastworks in the plains. Wurmser had twenty-six thousand men in Mantua; but from fear and fever half of them were in the hospitals.

Meanwhile, disaster had overtaken the French arms in the North. Jourdan had crossed the Rhine at Düsseldorf, as Moreau had at Kehl. They had each about seventy-five thousand men, while the army of Charles had been reduced by Wurmser's departure for Italy to a number far less. According to the plan of the Directory, these two French armies were to advance on parallel lines south of the neutral zone through Germany, and to join Bonaparte across the Tyrol for the advance to Vienna. Moreau defeated the Austrians, and reached Munich without a check. Würtemberg and Baden made peace with the French republic on its own terms, and Saxony, recalling its forces from the coalition, declared itself neutral, as Prussia had done. But Jourdan, having seized Würzburg and won the battle of Altenkirchen, was met on his way to Ratisbon and Neumarkt, and thoroughly beaten, by the same young Archduke Charles, who had acquired experience and learned wisdom in his defeat by Moreau. Both French armies were thus thrown back upon the Rhine, and there could be no further hope of carrying out the original plan. In this way the attention of the world was concentrated on the victorious Army of Italy and its young commander, whose importance was further enhanced by the fulfilment of his own prophecy that the fate of Europe hung on the decision of his campaign in Italy.

The glory of the imperial arms having been brilliantly vindicated in the North, the government at Vienna naturally thought it not impossible to relieve Mantua, and restore Austrian prestige in the South. Every effort was to be made. The Tyrolese sharp-shooters were called out, large numbers of raw recruits were gathered in Illyria and Croatia, while a few veterans were taken from the forces of the Archduke Charles. When these were collected, Quasdanowich found himself in Friuli with upward of thirty-five thousand men, while Davidowich in the Tyrol had eighteen thousand. The chief command of both armies was assigned to Alvinczy, an experienced but aged general, one of the same stock as that to which Wurmser belonged. About October first, the two forces moved simultaneously, one down the Adige, the other down the Piave, to unite before Vicenza, and proceed to the relief of Mantua. For the fourth time Bonaparte was to fight the same battle, on the same field, for the same object, with the same inferiority of numbers. His situation, however, was a trifle better than it had been, for several veteran battalions which were no longer needed in Vendée had arrived from the Army of the West; his own soldiers were also well equipped and enthusiastic. He wrote to the Directory, on October first, that he had thirty thousand effectives; but he probably had more, for it is scarcely possible that, as he said, eighteen thousand were in the hospitals. The populations around and behind him were, moreover, losing faith in Austria, and growing well disposed toward France. Many of his garrisons were, therefore, called in; and deducting eight thousand men destined for the siege of Mantua, he still had an army of nearly forty thousand men wherewith to meet the Austrians.

And yet this fourth division of the campaign opened with disaster to the French. In order to prevent the union of his enemy's two armies, Bonaparte ordered Vaubois, who had been left above Trent to guard the French conquests in the Tyrol, to attack Davidowich. The result was a rout, and Vaubois was compelled to abandon one strong position after another,—first Trent, then Roveredo,—until finally he felt able to make a stand on the right bank of the Adige at Rivoli,



DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER

BONAPARTE AT ARCOLE

FROM THE DRAWING BY H. CHARTIER

which commands the southern slopes of Monte Baldo. The other bank was in Austrian hands, and Davidowich could have debouched safely into the plain. This result was largely due to the clever mountain warfare of the Tyrolese militia. Meantime Masséna had advanced from Bassano up the Piave to observe Alvinczy. Augereau was at Verona. On November fourth, Alvinczy advanced and occupied Bassano, compelling Masséna to retreat before his superior force. Bonaparte, determined not to permit a junction of the two Austrian armies, moved with Augereau's division to reinforce Masséna and drive Alvinczy back into the valley of the Piave. Augereau fought all day on the sixth at Bassano, Masséna at Citadella. This first encounter was indecisive; but news of Vaubois's defeat having arrived, the French thought it best to retreat on the following day. There was not now a single obstacle to the union of the two Austrian armies; and on November ninth, Alvinczy started for Verona, where the French had halted on the eighth. It looked as if Bonaparte would be attacked on both flanks at once, and thus overwhelmed.

Verona lies on both banks of the river Adige, which is spanned by several bridges; but the heart of the town is on the right. The remains of Vaubois's army having been rallied at Rivoli, some miles further up on that bank, Bonaparte made all possible use of the stream as a natural fortification, and concentrated the remainder of his forces on the same side. Alvinczy came up and occupied Caldiero, situated on a gentle rise of the other shore to the south of east; but Davidowich, checked by the French division at Rivoli, which had been made by Bonaparte to feel thoroughly ashamed, and was now thirsty for revenge, remained some distance farther back to the north, where it was expected he would cross and come down on the left bank. To prevent this a fierce onslaught was made against Alvinczy's position on November twelfth by Masséna's corps. It was entirely unsuccessful, and the French were repulsed with the serious loss of three thousand men. Bonaparte's position was now even more critical than it had been at Castiglione; he had to contend with two new Austrian armies, one on each flank, and Wurmser with a third stood ready to sally out of Mantua in his rear. If there should be even partial coöperation between the Austrian leaders, he must retreat. But he felt sure there would be no coöperation whatsoever. From the force in Verona and that before Mantua twenty thousand men were gathered to descend the course of the Adige into the swampy lands about Ronco, where a crossing was to be made and Alvinczy caught, if possible, at Villanova, on his left flank. The manœuver, though highly dangerous, was fairly successful, and is considered by critics among the finest in this or any other of Bonaparte's campaigns. Amid these swamps, ditches, and dikes the methodical Austrians, aiming to carry strong positions by one fierce onset, were brought into the greatest disadvantage before the new tactics of swift movement in open columns, which were difficult to assail. By a feint of retreat to the westward the French army had left Verona without attracting attention, but by a swift countermarch it reached Ronco on the morning of November fifteenth, crossed in safety, and turned back to flank the Austrian position.

The first stand of the enemy was made at Arcole, where a short, narrow bridge connects the high dikes which regulate the sluggish stream of the little river Alpon, a tributary of the Adige on its left bank. This bridge was defended by two battalions of Croatian recruits, whose commander, Colonel Brigido, had placed a pair of field-pieces so as to enfilade it. The French had been advancing in three columns by as many causeways, the central one of which led to the bridge. The first attempt to cross was repulsed by the deadly fire which the Croats poured in from their sheltered position. Augereau, with his picked corps, fared no better in a second charge led by himself bearing the standard; and, in a third disastrous rush, Bonaparte, who had caught up the standard and planted it on the bridge with his own hand, was himself swept back into a quagmire, where he would have perished but for a fourth return of the grenadiers, who drove back the pursuing Austrians, and pulled their commander from the swamp. Fired by his undaunted courage, the gallant lines were formed once more. At that moment another French corps passed over lower down by a ferry, and the Austrians becoming disorganized, in spite of the large reinforcements which had come up under Alvinczy, the last charge on the bridge was successful. With the capture of Arcole the French turned their enemy's rear, and cut off not only his artillery, but his reserves in the valley of the Brenta. The advantage, however, was completely destroyed by the masterly retreat of Alvinczy from his position at Caldiero, effected by other causeways and another bridge further north, which the French had not been able to secure in time.

Bonaparte quickly withdrew to Ronco, and recrossed the Adige to meet an attack which he supposed Davidowich, having possibly forced Vaubois's position, would then certainly make. But that general was still in his old place, and gave no signs of activity. This movement misled Alvinczy, who, thinking the French had started from Mantua, returned by way of Arcole to pursue them. Again the French commander led his forces across the Adige into the swampy lowlands. His enemy had not forgotten the desperate fight at the bridge, and was timid; and besides, in his close formation, he was on such ground no match for the open ranks of the French. Retiring without any real resistance as far as Arcole, the Austrians made their stand a second time in that red-walled burg. Bonaparte could not well afford another direct attack, with its attendant losses, and strove to turn the position by fording the Alpon where it flows into the Adige. He failed, and withdrew once more to Ronco, the second day remaining indecisive. On the morning of the seventeenth, however, with undiminished fertility of resource, a new plan was adopted and successfully carried out. One of the pontoons on the Adige sank, and a body of Austrians charged the small division stationed on the left bank to guard it, in the hope of destroying the remainder of the bridge. They were repulsed and driven back toward the marshes with which they meant to cover their flank. The garrisons of both Arcole and Porcil, a neighboring hamlet, were seriously weakened by the detention of this force. Two French divisions were promptly despatched to make use of that advantage, while at the same time an ambuscade was laid among the pollard willows which lined the ditches beyond the retreating Austrians. At an opportune moment the ambuscade unmasked, and by a terrible fire drove three thousand of the Croatian recruits into the marsh, where most of them were drowned or shot. Advancing then beyond the Alpon by a bridge built during the previous night, Bonaparte gave battle on the high ground to an enemy whose numbers were now, as he calculated, reduced to a comparative equality with his own. The Austrians made a vigorous resistance; but such was their credulity as to anything their enemy might do, that a simple stratagem of the French made them believe that their left was turned by a division, when in reality but twenty-five men had been sent to ride around behind the swamps and blow their bugles. Being simultaneously attacked on the front of the same wing by Augereau, they drew off at last in good order toward Montebello. Thence Alvinczy slowly retreated into the valley of the Brenta. The French returned to Verona. Davidowich, ignorant of all that had occurred, now finally dislodged Vaubois; but, finding before him Masséna with his division where he had expected Alvinczy and a great Austrian army, he discreetly withdrew into the Tyrol. It was not until November twenty-third, long after the departure of both his colleagues, that Wurmser made a brilliant but of course ineffectual sally from Mantua. The French were so exhausted, and the Austrians so decimated and scattered, that by tacit consent hostilities were intermitted for nearly two months.

CHAPTER XXIX

BONAPARTE'S IMPERIOUS SPIRIT

Bonaparte's Transformation—Military Genius—Powers and Principles—Theory and Conduct—Political Activity—Purposes for Italy—Private Correspondence—Treatment of the Italian Powers—Antagonism to the Directory—The Task before Him.

DURING the two months between the middle of November, 1796, and the middle of January, 1797, there was a marked change in Bonaparte's character and conduct. After Arcole he appeared as a man very different from the novice he had been before Montenotte. Twice his fortunes had hung by a single hair, having been rescued by the desperate bravery of Rampon and his soldiers at Monte Legino, and again by Augereau's daring at Lonato; twice he had barely escaped being a prisoner, once at Valeggio, once at Lonato; twice his life had been spared in the heat of battle as if by a miracle, once at Lodi, once again at Arcole. These facts had apparently left a deep impression on his mind, for they were turned to the best account in making good a new step in social advancement. So far he had been as adventurous as the greatest daredevil among the subalterns, staking his life in every new venture; hereafter he seemed to appreciate his own value, and to calculate not only the imperiling of his life, but the intimacy of his conversation, with nice adaptation to some great result. Gradually and informally a kind of body-guard was organized, which, as the idea grew familiar, was skilfully developed into a picked corps, the best officers and finest soldiers being made to feel honored in its membership. The constant attendance of such men necessarily secluded the general-in-chief from those colleagues who had hitherto been familiar comrades. Something in the nature of formal etiquette once established, it was easy to extend its rules and confirm them. The generals were thus separated further and further from their superior, and before the new year they had insensibly adopted habits of address which displayed a high outward respect, and virtually terminated all comradeship with one who had so recently been merely the first among equals. Bonaparte's innate tendency to command was under such circumstances hardened into a habit of imperious dictation. In view of what had been accomplished, it would have been impossible, even for the most stubborn democrat, to check the process. Not one of Bonaparte's principles had failed to secure triumphant vindication.

In later years Napoleon himself believed, and subsequent criticism has confirmed his opinion, that the Italian campaign, taken as a whole, was his greatest. The revolution of any public system, social, political, or military, is always a gigantic task. It was nothing less than this which Bonaparte had wrought, not in one, but in all three spheres, during the summer and autumn of 1796. The changes, like those of most revolutions, were changes of emphasis and degree in the application of principles already divined. "Divide and conquer" was an old maxim; it was a novelty to see it applied in warfare and politics as Bonaparte applied it in Italy. It has been remarked that the essential difference between Napoleon and Frederick the Great was that the latter had not ten thousand men a month to kill. The notion that war should be short and terrible had, indeed, been clear to the great Prussian; Carnot and the times afforded the opportunity for its conclusive demonstration by the genius of the greater Corsican. Concentration of besiegers to breach the walls of a town was nothing new; but the triumphant application of the same principle to an opposing line of troops, though well known to Julius Cæsar, had been forgotten, and its revival was Napoleon's masterpiece. The martinets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had so exaggerated the formalities of war that the relation of armies to the fighting-ground had been little studied and well-nigh forgotten; the use of the map and the compass, the study of reliefs and profiles in topography, produced in Bonaparte's hands results that seemed to duller minds nothing short of miraculous. One of these was to oppose the old-school rigid formation of troops by any formation more or less open and irregular according to circumstances, but always the kind best suited to the character of the seat of war. The first two days at Arcole were the triumphant vindication of this concept. Finally, there was a fascination for the French soldiers in the primitive savagery of their general, which, though partly concealed, and somewhat held in by training, nevertheless was willing that the spoils of their conquest should be devoted to making the victorious contestants opulent; which scorned the limitations of human powers in himself and them, and thus accomplished feats of strength and stratagem which gratified to satiety that love for the uncommon, the ideal, and the great which is inherent in the spirit of their nation. In the successful combination and evolution of all these elements there was a grandeur which Bonaparte and every soldier of his army appreciated at its full value.

The military side of Bonaparte's genius is ordinarily considered the strongest. Judged by what is easily visible in the way of immediate consequences and permanent results, this appears to be true; and yet it was only one of many sides. Next in importance, if not equal to it, was his activity in politics and diplomacy. It is easy to call names, to stigmatize the peoples of Italy, all the nations even of western Europe, as corrupt and enervated, to laugh at their politics as antiquated, and to brand their rulers as incapable fools. An ordinary man can, by the assistance of the knowledge, education, and insight acquired by the experience of his race through an additional century, turn and show how commonplace was the person who toppled over such an old rotten structure. This is the method of Napoleon's detractors, except when, in addition, they first magnify his wickedness, and then further distort the proportion by viewing his fine powers through the other end of the glass. We all know how easy great things are when once they have been accomplished, how simple the key to a mystery when once it has been revealed. Morally considered, Bonaparte was a child of nature, born to a mean estate, buffeted by a cruel and remorseless society, driven in youth to every shift for self-preservation, compelled to fight an unregenerate world with its own weapons. He had not been changed in the flash of a gun. Elevation to reputation and power did not diminish the duplicity of his character; on the contrary, it possibly intensified it. Certainly the fierce light which began to beat upon him brought it into greater prominence. Truth, honor, unselfishness are theoretically the virtues of all philosophy; practically they are the virtues of Christian men in Christian society. Where should the scion of a Corsican stock, ignorant of moral or religious sentiment, thrown into the atmosphere and surroundings of the French Revolution, learn to practise them?

Such considerations are indispensable in the observation of Bonaparte's progress as a politician. His first settlement with the various peoples of central Italy was, as he had declared, only provisional. The uncertain status created by it was momentarily not unwelcome to the Directory. Their policy was to destroy existing institutions, and leave order to evolve itself from the chaos as best it could. Doctrinaires as they were, they meant to destroy absolute monarchy in Italy, as everywhere else, if possible, and then to stop, leaving the liberated peoples to their own devices. Some fondly believed that out of anarchy would arise, in accordance with "the law of nature," a pure democracy; while others had the same faith that the result would be constitutional monarchy. Moreover, things appear simpler in the perspective of distance than they do near at hand. The sincerity of Bonaparte's republicanism was like the sincerity of his conduct — an affair of time and place, a consistency with conditions and not with abstractions. He knew the Italian mob, and faithfully described it in his letters as dull, ignorant, and unreliable, without preparation or fitness for self-government. He was willing to establish the forms of constitutional administration; but in spite of hearty support from many disciples of the Revolution, he found those forms likely, if not certain, to crumble under their own weight, and was convinced that the real sovereignty must for years to come reside in a strong protectorate of some kind. It appeared to him a necessity of war that these peoples should relieve the destitution of the French treasury and army, a necessity of circumstances that France should be restored to vigor and health by laying tribute on their treasures of art and science, as on those of all the world, and a necessity of political science that artificial boundaries should be destroyed, as they had been in France, to produce the homogeneity of condition essential to national or administrative unity.

The Italians themselves understood neither the policy of the French executive nor that of their conqueror. The transitional position in which the latter had left them produced great uneasiness. The terrified local authorities asked nothing better than to be left as they were, with a view to profiting by the event, whatever it might be. After every Austrian success there were numerous local revolts, which the French garrison commanders suppressed with severity. Provisional governments soon come to the end of their usefulness, and the enemies of France began to take advantage of the disorder in order to undo what had been done. The English, for example, had seized Porto Ferrajo in place of Leghorn; the Pope had gone further, and, in spite of the armistice, was assembling an army for the recovery of Bologna, Ferrara, and his other lost legations. Thus it happened that in the intervals of the most laborious military operations, a political activity, both comprehensive and feverish, kept pace in Bonaparte's mind with that which was needed to regulate his campaigning.

At the very outset there was developed an antagonism between the notions of the Directory and Bonaparte's interests. The latter observed all the forms of consulting his superiors, but acted without the slightest reference to their instructions, often even before they could receive his despatches. Both he and they knew the weakness of the French government, and the inherent absurdity of the situation. The story of French conquest in Italy might be told exactly as if the invading general were acting solely on his own responsibility. In his proclamations to the Italians was one language; in his letters to the executive, another; in a few confidential family communications, still another; in his own heart, the same old idea of using each day as it came to advance his own fortunes. As far as he had any love of country, it was expended on France, and what we may call his principles were conceptions derived from the Revolution; but somehow the best interests of France and the safety of revolutionary doctrine were every day more involved in the pacification of Italy, in the humiliation of Austria, and in the supremacy of the army. There was only one man who could secure all three; could give consistency to the flabby, visionary policy of the Directory; could repress the frightful robberies of its civil agents in Italy; could with any show of reason humble Italy with one hand, and then with the other rouse her to wholesome energy; could enrich and glorify France while crushing out, as no royal dynasty had ever been able to do, the haughty rivalry of the Hapsburgs.

These purposes made Bonaparte the most gentle and conciliatory of men in some directions; in others they developed and hardened his imperiousness. His correspondence mirrors both his mildness and his arbitrariness. His letters to the Directory abound in praise of his officers and men, accompanied by demands for the promotion of those who had performed distinguished services. Writing to General Clarke on November nineteenth, 1796, from Verona, he says, in words full of pathos: "Your nephew Elliot was killed on the battle-field of Arcole. This youth had made himself familiar with arms; several times he had marched at the head of columns; he would one day have been an estimable officer. He died with glory, in the face of the foe; he did not suffer for a moment. What reasonable man would not envy such a death? Who is he that in the vicissitudes of life would not agree to leave in such a way a world so often worthy of contempt? What one of us has not a hundred times regretted that he could not thus be withdrawn from the powerful effects of calumny, of envy, and of all the hateful passions that seem almost entirely to control human conduct?" Perhaps these few words to the widow of one of his late officers are even finer: "Muiron died at my side on the late battle-field of Arcole. You have lost a husband that was dear to you; I, a friend to whom I have long been attached: but the country loses more than us both in the death of an officer distinguished no less by his talents than by his rare courage. If I can be of service in anything to you or his child, I pray you count altogether upon me." That was all; but it was enough. With the ripening of character, and under the responsibilities of life, an individual style had come at last. It is martial and terse almost to affectation, defying translation, and perfectly reflecting the character of its writer.

But the hours when the general-in-chief was war-worn, weary, tender, and subject to human regrets like other men, were not those which he revealed to the world. He was peremptory, and sometimes even peevish, with the French executive after he had them in his hand; with Italy he assumed a parental rôle, meting out chastisement and reward as best suited his purpose. A definite treaty of peace had been made with Sardinia, and that power, though weak and maimed, was going its own way. The Transpadane Republic, which he had begun to organize as soon as he entered Milan, was carefully cherished and guided in its artificial existence; but the people, whether or not they were fit, had no chance to exercise any real independence under the shadow of such a power. It was, moreover, not the power of France; for, by special order of Bonaparte, the civil agents of the Directory were subordinated to the military commanders, ostensibly because the former were so rapacious. Lombardy in this way became his very own. Rome had made the armistice of Bologna merely to gain time, and in the hope of eventual disaster to French arms. A pretext for the resumption of hostilities was easily found by her in a foolish command, issued from Paris, that the Pope should at length recognize as regular those of the clergy who had sworn allegiance to the successive constitutions adopted under the republic, and withdraw all his proclamations against those who had observed their oaths and conformed. The Pontiff, relying on the final success of Austria, had virtually broken off negotiations. Bonaparte informed the French agent in Rome that he must do anything to gain time, anything to deceive the "old fox"; in a favorable moment he expected to pounce upon Rome, and avenge the national honor. During the interval Naples also had become refractory; refusing a tribute demanded by the Directory, she was not only collecting soldiers, like the Pope, but actually had some regiments in marching order. Venice, asserting her neutrality, was growing more and more bitter at the constant violations of her territory. Mantua was still a defiant fortress, and in this crisis nothing was left but to revive French credit where the peoples were best disposed and their old rulers weakest.

Accordingly, Bonaparte went through the form of consulting the Directory as to a plan of procedure, and then, without waiting for an answer from them, and without the consent of those most deeply interested, broke the armistice with Modena on the pretext that five hundred thousand francs of ransom money were yet unpaid, and drove the duke from his throne. This duchy was the nucleus about which was to be constituted the Cispadane Republic: in conjunction with its inhabitants, those of Reggio, Bologna, and Ferrara were invited to form a free government under that name. There had at least been a pretext for erecting the Milanese into the Transpadane Republic — that of driving an invader from its soil. This time there was no pretext of that kind, and the Directory opposed so bold an act regarding these lands, being uneasy about public opinion in regard to it. They hoped the war would soon be ended, and were verging to the opinion that their armies must before long leave the Italians to their own devices. The conduct of their general pointed, however, in the opposite direction; he forced the native liberals of the district to take the necessary steps toward organizing the new state so rapidly that the Directory found itself compelled to yield. It is possible, but not likely, that, as has been charged, Bonaparte really intended to bring about what actually happened, the continued dependence on the French republic of a lot of artificial governments The uninterrupted meddling of France in the affairs of the Italians destroyed in the end all her influence, and made them hate her dominion, which masqueraded as liberalism, even more than they had hated the open but mild tyranny of those royal scions of foreign stocks recently dismissed from their thrones. During these months there is in Bonaparte's correspondence a somewhat theatrical iteration of devotion to France and republican principles, but his first care was for his army and the success of his campaign. He behaved as any general solicitous for the strength of his positions on foreign soil would have done, his ruses taking the form of constantly repeating the political shibboleths then used in France. Soon afterward Naples made her peace; an insurrection in Corsica against English rule enabled France to seize that island once more; and Genoa entered into a formal alliance with the Directory.

Thenceforward there appears in Bonaparte's nature no trace of the Corsican patriot. The one faint spark of remaining interest seems to have been extinguished in an order that Pozzo di Borgo and his friends, if they had not escaped, should be brought to judgment. His other measures with reference to the once loved island were as calculating and dispassionate as any he took concerning the most indifferent principality of the mainland, and even extended to enunciating the principle that no Corsican should be employed in Corsica. It is a citizen not of Corsica, nor of France even, but of Europe, who on October second demands peace from the Emperor in a threat that if it is not yielded on favorable terms Triest and the Adriatic will be seized. At the same time the Directory received from him another reminder of its position, which likewise indicates an interesting development of his own policy. "Diminish the number of your enemies. The influence of Rome is incalculable; it was ill advised to break with that power; it gives the advantage to her. If I had been consulted, I would have delayed the negotiations with Rome as with Genoa and Venice. Whenever your general in Italy is not the pivot of everything, you run great risks. This language will not be attributed to ambition; I have but too many honors, and my health is so broken that I believe I must ask you for a successor. I can no longer mount a horse; I have nothing left but courage, which is not enough in a post like this." Before this masked dictator were two tasks as difficult in their way as any even he would ever undertake, each calling for the exercise of faculties antipodal in quality, but quite as fine as any in the human mind. Mantua was yet to be captured; Rome and the Pope were to be handled so as to render the highest service to himself, to France, and to Europe. In both these labors he meant to be strengthened and yet unhampered. The habit of compliance was now strong upon the Directory, and they continued to yield as before.

CHAPTER XXX

RIVOLI AND THE CAPITULATION OF MANTUA

Austria's Strategic Plan—Renewal of Hostilities—The Austrians at Rivoli and Nogara—Bonaparte's Night March to Rivoli—Monte Baldo and the Berner Klause—The Battle of Rivoli—The Battle of La Favorita—Feats of the French Army—Bonaparte's Achievement—The Fall of Mantua.

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THE fifth division of the Italian campaign was the fourth attempt of Austria to retrieve her position in Italy, a position on which her rulers believed that all her destinies hung. Once more Alvinczy, despairing of success, but obedient to his orders, made ready to move down the Adige from Trent. Great zeal had been shown in Austria. The Vienna volunteer battalions abandoned the work of home protection for which they had enlisted, and, with a banner embroidered by the Empress's own hand, joined the active forces. The Tyrolese, in defiance of an atrocious proclamation in which Bonaparte, claiming to be their conqueror, had threatened death to any one taking up arms against France, flocked again to the support of their Emperor. By a recurrence to the old fatal plan, Alvinczy was to attack the main French army; his colleague Provera was to follow the Brenta into the lower reaches of the Adige, where he could effect a crossing, and relieve Mantua. The latter was to deceive the enemy by making a parade of greater strength than he really had, and thus draw away Bonaparte's main army toward Legnago on the lower Adige. A messenger was despatched to Wurmser with letters over the Emperor's own signature, ordering him, if Provera should fail, to desert Mantua, retreat into the Romagna, and under his own command unite the garrison and the papal troops. This order never reached its destination, for its bearer was intercepted, and was compelled by the use of an emetic to render up the despatches which he had swallowed.

On January seventh, 1797, Bonaparte gave orders to strengthen the communications along his line, massing two thousand men at Bologna in order to repress certain hostile demonstrations lately made in behalf of the Pope. On the following day an Austrian division which had been lying at Padua made a short attack on Augereau's division, and on the ninth drove it into Porto Legnago, the extreme right of the French line. This could mean nothing else than a renewal of hostilities by Austria, although it was impossible to tell where the main attack would be made. On the eleventh Bonaparte was at Bologna, concluding an advantageous treaty with Tuscany; in order to be ready for any event, he started the same evening, hastened across the Adige with his troops, and pressed on to Verona.

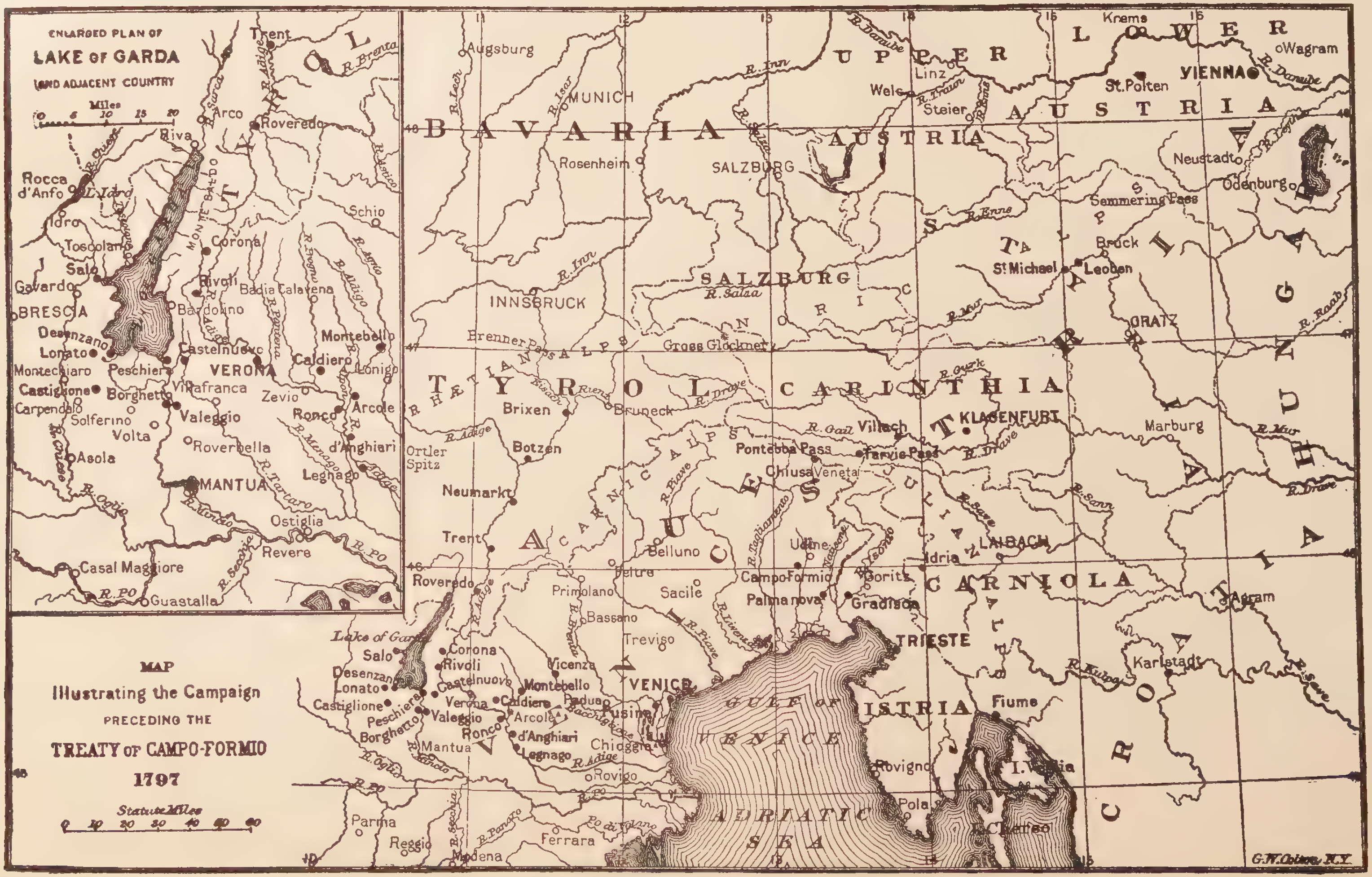
On the twelfth, at six in the morning, the enemy attacked Masséna's advance-guard at St. Michel, a suburb of that city. They were repulsed with loss. Early on the same day Joubert, who had been stationed with a corps of observation farther up in the old and tried position at the foot of Monte Baldo, became aware of hostile movements, and occupied Rivoli. During the day two Austrian columns tried to turn his position by seizing his outpost at Corona, but they were repulsed. On the thirteenth he became aware that the main body of the Austrians was before him, and that their intention was to surround him by the left. Accordingly he informed Bonaparte, abandoned Corona, and made ready to retreat from Rivoli. That evening Provera threw a pontoon bridge across the Adige at Anghiari, below Legnago, and crossed with a portion of his army. Next day he started for Mantua, but was so harassed by Guieu and Augereau that the move was ineffectual, and he got no farther than Nogara.

The heights of Rivoli command the movements of any force passing out of the Alps through the valley of the Adige. They are abrupt on all sides but one, where from the greatest elevation the chapel of St. Mark overlooked a winding road, steep, but available for cavalry and artillery. Rising from the general level of the table-land, this hillock is in itself a kind of natural citadel. Late on the thirteenth, Joubert, in reply to the message he had sent, received orders to fortify the plateau, and to hold it at all hazards; for Bonaparte now divined that the main attack was to be made there in order to divert all opposition from Provera, and that if it were successful the two Austrian armies would meet at Mantua. By ten that evening the reports brought in from Joubert and by scouts left this conclusion no longer doubtful. That very night, therefore, being in perfect readiness for either event, Bonaparte moved toward Rivoli with a force numbering about twenty thousand. It was composed of every available French soldier between Desenzano and Verona, including Masséna's division. By strenuous exertions they reached the heights of Rivoli about two in the morning of the fourteenth. Alvinczy, ignorant of what had happened, was waiting for daylight in order to carry out his original design of inclosing and capturing the comparatively small force of Joubert and the strong place which it had been set to hold, a spot long since recognized by Northern peoples as the key to the portal of Italy. Bonaparte, on his arrival, perceived in the moonlight five divisions encamped in a semicircle below; their bivouac fires made clear that they were separated from one another by considerable distances. He knew then that his instinct had been correct, that this was the main army, and that the decisive battle would be fought next day. The following hours were spent in disposing his forces to meet the attack in any form it might take. Not a man was wasted, but the region was occupied with pickets, outposts, and reserves so ingeniously stationed that the study of that field, and of Bonaparte's disposition of his forces, has become a classic example in military science.

The gorge by which the Adige breaks through the lowest foot-hills of the Alps to enter the lowlands has been famous since dim antiquity. The Romans considered it the entrance to Cimmeria; it was sung in German myths as the Berner Klause, the majestic gateway from their inclement clime into the land of the stranger, the warm, bright land for the luxurious and orderly life of which their hearts were ever yearning. Around its precipices and isolated, frowning bastions song and fable had clustered, and the effect of mystery was enhanced by the awful grandeur of the scene. Overlooking all stands Monte Baldo, frowning with its dark precipices on the cold summits of the German highland, smiling with its sunny slopes on the blue waters of Lake Garda and the fertile valley of the Po. In the change of strategy incident to the introduction of gunpowder the spot of greatest resistance was no longer in the gorge, but at its mouth, where Rivoli on one side, and Ceraino on the other, command respectively the gentle slopes which fall eastward and westward toward the plains. The Alps were indeed looking down on the "little corporal," who, having flanked their defenses at one end, was now about to force their center, and later to pass by their eastward end into the hereditary dominions of the German emperors on the Danube.

At early dawn began the conflict which was to settle the fate of Mantua. The first fierce contest was between the Austrian left and the French right at St. Mark; but it quickly spread along the whole line as far as Caprino. For some time the Austrians had the advantage, and the result was in suspense, since the French left, at Caprino, yielded for an instant before the onslaught of the main Austrian army made in accordance with Alvinczy's first plan, and, as he supposed, upon an inferior force by one vastly superior in numbers. Berthier, who by his calm courage was fast rising high in his commander's favor, came to the rescue, and Masséna, following with a judgment which has inseparably linked his name with that famous spot, finally restored order to the French ranks. Every successive charge of the Austrians was repulsed with a violence which threw their right and center back toward Monte Baldo in ever growing confusion. The battle waged for nearly three hours before Alvinczy understood that it was not Joubert's division, but Bonaparte's army, which was before him. A fifth Austrian column then pressed forward from the bank of the Adige to scale the height of Rivoli, and Joubert, whose left at St. Mark was hard beset, could not check the movement. For an instant he left the road unprotected. The Austrians charged up the hill and seized the commanding position; but simultaneously there rushed from the opposite side three French battalions, clambering up to retrieve the loss. The nervous activity of the latter brought them quickly to the top, where at once they were reinforced by a portion of the cavalry reserve, and the storming columns were thrown back in disorder. At that instant appeared in Bonaparte's rear an Austrian corps which had been destined to take the French at Rivoli in their rear. Had it arrived sooner, the position would, as the French declared, have been lost to them. As it was, instead of making an attack, the Austrians had to await one. Bonaparte directed a galling artillery fire against them, and threw them back toward Lake Garda. He thus gained time to reform his own ranks and enabled Masséna to hold in check still another of the Austrian columns, which was striving to outflank him on his left. Thereupon the French reserve under Rey, coming in from the westward, cut the turning column entirely off, and compelled it to surrender. The rest of Alvinczy's force being already in full retreat, this ended the worst defeat and most complete rout which the Austrian arms had so far sustained. Such was the utter demoralization of the flying and disintegrated columns that a young French officer named Réné, who was in command of fifty men at a hamlet on Lake Garda, successfully imitated Bonaparte's ruse at Lonato, and displayed such an imposing confidence to a flying troop of fifteen hundred Austrians that they surrendered to what appeared to be a force superior to their own. Next morning at dawn, Murat, who had marched all night to gain the point, appeared on the slopes of Monte Baldo above Corona, and united with Joubert to drive the Austrians from their last foothold. The pursuit was continued as far as Trent. Thirteen thousand prisoners were captured in those two days.

While Murat was straining up the slopes of Monte Baldo, Bonaparte, giving no rest to the weary feet of Masséna's division,—the same men who two days before had marched by night from Verona,—was retracing his steps on that well-worn road past the city of Catullus and the Capulets onward toward Mantua. Provera had crossed the Adige at Anghiari with ten thousand men. Twice he had been attacked: once in the front by Guieu, once in the rear by Augereau. On both occasions his losses had been severe, but nevertheless, on the same morning which saw Alvinczy's flight into the Tyrol, he finally appeared with six thousand men in the suburb of St. George, before Mantua. He succeeded in communicating with Wurmser, but was held in check by the blockading French army throughout the day and night until Bonaparte arrived with his reinforcements. Next morning there was a general engagement, Provera attacking in front, and Wurmser, by preconcerted arrangement, sallying out from behind at the head of a strong force. The latter was thrown back into the town by Sérurier, who commanded the besiegers, but only after a fierce and deadly conflict on the causeway. This was the road from Mantua to a country-seat of its dukes known as "La Favorita," and was chosen for the sortie as having an independent citadel. Victor, with some of the troops brought in from Rivoli, the "terrible fifty-seventh demi-brigade," as Bonaparte designated them, attacked Provera at the same time, and threw his ranks into such disorder that he was glad to surrender his entire force. This conflict of January sixteenth, before Mantua, is known as the battle of La Favorita, from the



MAP
Illustrating the Campaign
PRECEDING THE
TREATY OF CAMPO-FORMIO
1797

Statute Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
ENLARGED PLAN OF
LAKE OF GARDA
AND ADJACENT COUNTRY
Miles
0 5 10 15 20
Trent
Arco
Riva
Roveredo
Rocca d'Anfo
L. Idro
Idro
Toscolano
Salo
Gavardo
BRESCIA
Desenzano
Lonato
Montechiaro
Castiglione
Carpendolo
Solferino
Volta
Asola
Peschiera
Borghetto
Villafranca
Valeggio
Roverbella
MANTUA
Ostiglia
Revere
Casal Maggiore
Guastalla
MONTE BALDO
Corona
Rivoli
Bardolino
Castelnuovo
VERONA
Caldiero
Montebello
Lonigo
Zevio
Ronco
Arcole
d'Anghiari
Legnago
Badia Calavena
Schio
TYROL
R. Chiese
R. Oglio
R. Mincio
R. Po
R. Secchia
R. Tartaro
R. Menago
R. Adige
R. Sarca
R. Brenta
R. Astico
R. Agno
R. Alpone
R. Fontana
R. Tregnago
BAVARIA
Augsburg
MUNICH
Rosenheim
INNSBRUCK
Brenner Pass
RHÆTIAN ALPS
TYROL
Brixen
Bruneck
Botzen
Ortler Spitz
Neumarkt
Trent
Roveredo
SALZBURG
NORIC
Gross Glockner
UPPER AUSTRIA
LOWER AUSTRIA
Linz
Wels
Steier
Krems
St. Polten
VIENNA
Wagram
Neustadt
Odenburg
Semmering Pass
STYRIAN ALPS
St Michael
Leoben
Bruck
GRATZ
Marburg
HUNGARY
CARINTHIA
Villach
KLAGENFURT
Pontebba Pass
Tarvis Pass
Chiusa Veneta
CARNIC ALPS
JULIAN ALPS
LAIBACH
Idria
CARNIOLA
Agram
Karlstadt
CROATIA
VENETIAN
Belluno
Feltre
Primolano
Bassano
Treviso
Sacile
Udine
Campo Formio
Palma nova
Goritz
Gradisca
TRIESTE
ISTRIA
Fiume
Rovigno
Pola
I. Veglia
I. Cherso
GULF OF VENICE
ADRIATIC SEA
VENICE
Fusina
Chioggia
Rovigo
Padua
Vicenza
Lake of Garda
Parma
Reggio
Modena
Ferrara
Po di Volano
R. Inn
R. Isar
R. Lech
R. Danube
R. Traun
R. Enns
R. Salza
R. Mur
R. Drave
R. Gurk
R. Gail
R. Save
R. Sann
R. Kulpa
R. Raab
R. Leytha
R. Rienz
R. Eisach
R. Piave
R. Tagliamento
R. Isonzo
R. Natisone
R. Livenza
R. Bacchiglione
R. Panaro
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
45 46 47 48
G.W. Colton, N.Y.

stand made by Sérurier on the road to that residence. Its results were six thousand prisoners, among them the Vienna volunteers with the Empress's banner, and many guns.

Bonaparte estimated that the army of the republic had fought within four days two pitched battles, and had besides been six times engaged; that they had taken, all told, nearly twenty-five thousand prisoners, including a lieutenant-general, two generals, and fifteen colonels, had captured twenty standards, with sixty pieces of artillery, and had killed or wounded six thousand men.

This short campaign of Rivoli was the turning-point of the war, and may be said to have shaped the history of Europe for twenty years. Chroniclers dwell upon those few moments at St. Mark and the plateau of Rivoli, wondering what the result would have been if the Austrian corps which came to turn the rear of Rivoli had arrived five minutes sooner. But an accurate and dispassionate criticism must decide that every step in Bonaparte's success was won by careful forethought, and by the most effective disposition of the forces at his command. So sure was he of success that even in the crisis when Masséna seemed to save the day on the left, and when the Austrians seemed destined to wrest victory from defeat on the right, he was self-reliant and cheerful. The new system of field operations had a triumphant vindication at the hands of its author. The conquering general meted out unstinted praise to his invincible squadrons and their leaders, but said nothing of himself, leaving the world to judge whether this were man or demon who, still a youth, and within a public career of but one season, had humiliated the proudest empire on the Continent, had subdued Italy, and on her soil had erected states unknown before, without the consent of any great power, not excepting France. It is not wonderful that this personage should sometimes have said of himself, "Say that my life began at Rivoli," as at other times he dated his military career from Toulon.

Wurmser's retreat to Mantua in September had been successful because of the strong cavalry force which accompanied it. He had been able to hold out for four months only by means of the flesh of their horses, five thousand in number, which had been killed and salted to increase the garrison stores. Even this resource was now exhausted, and after a few days of delay the gallant old man sent a messenger with the usual conventional declarations as to his ability for further resistance, in order, of course, to secure the most favorable terms of surrender. There is a fine anecdote in connection with the arrival of this messenger at the French headquarters, which, though perhaps not literally, is probably ideally, true. When the Austrian envoy entered Sérurier's presence, another person wrapped in a cloak was sitting at a table apparently engaged in writing. After the envoy had finished the usual enumeration of the elements of strength still remaining to his commander, the unknown man came forward, and, holding a written sheet in his hand, said: "Here are my conditions. If Wurmser really had provisions for twenty-five days, and spoke of surrender, he would not deserve an honorable capitulation. But I respect the age, the gallantry, and the misfortunes of the marshal; and whether he opens his gates to-morrow, or whether he waits fifteen days, a month, or three months, he shall still have the same conditions; he may wait until his last morsel of bread has been eaten." The messenger was a clever man who afterward rendered his own name, that of Klenau, illustrious. He recognized Bonaparte, and, glancing at the terms, found them so generous that he at once admitted the desperate straits of the garrison. This is substantially the account of Napoleon's memoirs. In a contemporary despatch to the Directory there is nothing of it, for he never indulged in such details to them; but he does say in two other despatches what at first blush militates against its literal truth. On February first, writing from Bologna, he declared that he would withdraw his conditions unless Wurmser acceded before the third: yet, in a letter of that very date, he indulges in a long and high-minded eulogium of the aged field-marshal, and declares his wish to show true French generosity to such a foe. The simple explanation is that, having sent the terms, Bonaparte immediately withdrew from Mantua to leave Sérurier in command at the surrender, a glory he had so well deserved, and then returned to Bologna to begin his final preparations against Rome. In the interval Wurmser made a proposition even more favorable to himself. Bonaparte petulantly rejected it, but with the return of his generous feeling, he determined that at least he would not withdraw his first offer. Captious critics are never content, and they even charge that when, on the tenth, Wurmser and his garrison finally did march out, Bonaparte's absence was a breach of courtesy. It requires no great ardor in his defense to assert, on the contrary, that in circumstances so unprecedented the disparity of age between the respective representatives of the old

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and the new military system would have made Bonaparte's presence another drop in the bitter cup of the former. The magnanimity of the young conqueror in connection with the fall of Mantua was genuine, and highly honorable to him. So at least thought Wurmser himself, who wrote a most kindly letter to Bonaparte, forewarning him that a plot had been formed in Bologna to poison him with that noted, but never seen, compound so famous in Italian history — aqua tofana.

CHAPTER XXXI

HUMILIATION OF THE PAPACY AND OF VENICE

Rome Threatened — Pius VI. Surrenders — The Peace of Tolentino — Bonaparte and the Papacy — Designs for the Orient — The Policy of Austria — The Archduke Charles — Bonaparte Hampered by the Directory — His Treatment of Venice — Condition of Venetia — The Commonwealth Warned.

BONAPARTE seems after Rivoli to have reached the conviction that a man who had brought such glory to the arms of France was at least as firm in the affections of her people as was the Directory, which had no hold on them whatever, except in its claim to represent the Revolution. It had had little right to this distinction from the beginning, and even that was daily disputed by ever increasing numbers: the most visible and dazzling representative of the Revolution was now the Army of Italy. It was not for "those rascally lawyers," as Bonaparte soon afterward called the directors, that Rivoli had been fought. With this fact in view, the short ensuing campaign against Pius VI., and its consequences, are easily understood. It was true, as the French general proclaimed, that Rome had kept the stipulations of the armistice neither in a pacific behavior nor in the payment of her indemnity, and was fomenting resistance to the French arms throughout the peninsula. To the Directory, which desired the entire overthrow of the papacy, Bonaparte proposed that with this in view Rome should be handed over to Spain. Behind these pretexts he gathered at Bologna an indifferent force of eleven thousand soldiers, composed half of his own men, the other half of Italians fired with revolutionary zeal, and of Poles, a people who, since the recent dismemberment of their country, were wooing France as a possible ally in its reconstruction. The main division marched against Ancona; a smaller one of two thousand men directed its course through Tuscany into the valley of the Tiber.

The position of the Pope was utterly desperate. The Spaniards had once been masters of Italy; they were now the natural allies of France against Austria, and Bonaparte's leniency to Parma and Naples had strengthened the bond. The reigning king at Naples, Ferdinand IV. of the Two Sicilies, was one of the Spanish Bourbons; but his very able and masterful wife was the daughter of Maria Theresa. His position was therefore peculiar: if he had dared, he would have sent an army to the Pope's support, for thus far his consort had shaped his policy in the interest of Austria; but knowing full well that defeat would mean the limitation of his domain to the island of Sicily, he preferred to remain neutral, and pick up what crumbs he could get from Bonaparte's table. For this there were excellent reasons. The English fleet had been more or less unfortunate since the spring of 1796: Bonaparte's victories, being supplemented by the activity of the French cruisers, had made it difficult for it to remain in the Mediterranean; Corsica was abandoned in September; and in October the squadron of Admiral Mann was literally chased into the Atlantic by the Spaniards. Ferdinand, therefore, could expect no help from the British. As to the papal mercenaries, they had long been the laughing-stock of Europe. They did not now belie their character. Not a single serious engagement was fought; at Ancona and Loretto twelve hundred prisoners, with a treasure valued at seven million francs, were taken without a blow; and on February nineteenth Bonaparte dictated the terms of peace at Tolentino.

The terms were not such as either the Pope or the Directory expected. Far from it. To be sure, there was, over and above the first ransom, a new money indemnity of fifteen million francs, making, when added to what had been exacted in the previous summer, a total of thirty-six. Further stipulations were the surrender of the legations of Bologna and Ferrara, together with the Romagna; consent to the incorporation into France of Avignon and the Venaissin, the two papal possessions in the Rhone valley which had already been annexed; and the temporary delivery of Ancona as a pledge for the fulfilment of these engagements; further still, the dispersion of the papal army, with satisfaction for the killing in a street row of Basseville, the French plenipotentiary. This, however, was far short of the annihilation of the papacy as a temporal power. More than that, the vital question of ecclesiastical authority was not mentioned except to guarantee it in the surrendered legations. To the Directory Bonaparte explained that with such mutilations the Roman edifice would fall of its own weight; and yet he gave his powerful protection to the French priests who had refused the oaths to the civil constitution required by the republic, and who, having renounced their allegiance, had found an asylum in the Papal States. This latter step was taken in the rôle of humanitarian. In reality, this first open and radical departure from the policy of the Directory assured to Bonaparte the most unbounded personal popularity with faithful Roman Catholics everywhere, and was a step preliminary to his further alliance with the papacy. The unthinking masses began to compare the captivity of the Roman Church in France, which was the work of her government, with the widely different fate of her faithful adherents at Rome under the humane control of Bonaparte.

Moreover, it was the French citizen collectors, and not the army, who continued to scour every town for art plunder. It was believed that Italy had finally given up "all that was curious and valuable except some few objects at Turin and Naples," including the famous wonder-working image of the Lady of Loretto. The words quoted were used by Bonaparte in a despatch to the Directory, which inclosed a curious document of very different character. Such had been the gratitude of Pius for his preservation that he despatched a legate with his apostolic blessing for the "dear son" who had snatched the papal power from the very jaws of destruction. "Dear son" was merely a formal phrase, and a gracious answer was returned from the French headquarters. This equally formal letter of Bonaparte's was forwarded to Paris, where, as he knew would be the case, it was regarded as a good joke by the Directory, who were supposed to consider their general's diplomacy as altogether patriotic. But, as no doubt the writer foresaw, it had an altogether different effect on the public. From that instant every pious Roman Catholic, not only in France, but throughout Europe, whatever his attitude toward the Directory, was either an avowed ally of Bonaparte or at least willing to await events in a neutral spirit. As for the papacy, henceforward it was a tool in the conqueror's hand. One of the cardinals gave the gracious preserver of his order a bust of Alexander the Great: it was a common piece of flattery after the peace to say that Bonaparte was, like Alexander, a Greek in stature, and, like Cæsar, a Roman in power.

While at Ancona Bonaparte had a temporary relapse into his yearning for Oriental power. He wrote describing the harbor as the only good one on the Adriatic south of Venice, and explaining how invaluable it was for the influence of France on Turkey, since it controlled communication with Constantinople, and Macedonia was but twenty-four hours distant. With this despatch he inclosed letters from the Czar to the Grand Master of Malta which had been seized on the person of a courier. It was by an easy association of ideas that not long afterward Bonaparte began to make suggestions for the seizure of Malta and for a descent into Egypt. These were old schemes of French foreign policy, and by no means original with him; but having long been kept in the background, they were easily recalled, the more so because in a short time both the new dictator and the Directory seemed to find in them a remedy for their strained relations.

Meantime the foreign affairs of Austria had fallen into a most precarious condition. Not only had the departure of the English fleet from the Mediterranean furthered Bonaparte's success in Italy, but Russia had given notice of an altered policy. If the modern state system of Europe had rested on any one doctrine more firmly than on another, it was on the theory of territorial boundaries, and the inviolability of national existence. Yet, in defiance of all right and all international law, Prussia, Russia, and Austria had in 1772 swooped down like vultures on Poland, and parted large portions of her still living body among themselves. The operation was so much to their liking that it had been repeated in 1792, and completed in 1795. The last division had been made with the understanding that, in return for the lion's share which she received, Russia would give active assistance to Austria in her designs on northern Italy. Not content with the Milanese and a protectorate over Modena, Francis had already cast his eyes on the Venetian mainland. But on November seventeenth, 1796, the great Catherine died, and her successor, Paul, refused to be bound by his mother's engagements. Prussia was consolidating herself into a great power likely in the end to destroy Austrian influence in the Germanic Diet, which controlled the affairs of the empire.

The hour was dark indeed for Austria; and in the crisis Thugut, the able minister of the Emperor, made up his mind at last to throw all his master's military strength into Italy. The youthful Archduke Charles, who had won great glory as the conqueror of Jourdan, was accordingly summoned from Germany with the strength of his army to break through the Tyrol, and prevent the French from taking the now open road to Vienna. This brother of the Emperor, though but twenty-five years old, was in his day second only to Bonaparte as a general. The splendid persistence with which Austria raised one great army after another to oppose France was worthy of her traditions. Even when these armies were commanded by veterans of the old school, they were terrible: it seemed to the cabinet at Vienna that if Charles were left to lead them in accordance with his own designs they would surely be victorious. Had he and his Army of the Rhine been in Italy from the outset, they thought, the result might have been different. Perhaps they were right; but his tardy arrival at the eleventh hour was destined to avail nothing. The Aulic Council ordered him into Friuli, a district of the Italian Alps on the borders of Venice, where another army — the sixth within a year — was to assemble for the protection of the Austrian frontier and await the arrival of the veterans from Germany. This force, unlike the other five, was composed of heterogeneous elements, and, until further strengthened, inferior in numbers to the French, who had finally been reinforced by fifteen thousand men, under Bernadotte, from the Army of the Sambre and Meuse.

When Bonaparte started from Mantua for the Alps, his position was the strongest he had so far secured. The Directory had until then shown their uneasy jealousy of him by refusing the reinforcements which he was constantly demanding. It had become evident that the approaching elections would result in destroying their ascendancy in the Five Hundred, and that more than ever they must depend for support on the army. Accordingly they had swallowed their pride, and made Bonaparte strong. This change in the policy of the government likewise affected the south and east of France most favorably for his purposes. The personal pique of the generals commanding in those districts had subjected him to many inconveniences as to communications with Paris, as well as in the passage of troops, stores, and the like. They now recognized that in the approaching political crisis the fate of the republic would hang on the army, and for that reason they must needs be complaisant with its foremost figure, whose exploits had dimmed even those of Hoche in the Netherlands and western France. Italy was altogether subdued, and there was not a hostile power in the rear of the great conqueror. Among many of the conquered his name was even beloved: for the people of Milan his life and surroundings had the same interest as if he were their own sovereign prince. In front, however, the case was different; for the position of the Archduke Charles left the territory of Venice directly between the hostile armies in such a way as apparently to force Bonaparte into adopting a definite policy for the treatment of that power.

For the moment, however, there was no declaration of his decision by the French commander-in-chief; not even a formal proposal to treat with the Venetian oligarchy, which, to all outward appearance, had remained as haughty as ever, as dark and inscrutable in its dealings, as doubtful in the matter of good faith. And yet a method in Bonaparte's dealing with it was soon apparent, which, though unlike any he had used toward other Italian powers, was perfectly adapted to the ends he had in view. He had already violated Venetian neutrality, and intended to disregard it entirely. As a foretaste of what that republic might expect, French soldiers were let loose to pillage her towns until the inhabitants were so exasperated that they retaliated by killing a few of their spoilers. Then began a persistent and exasperating process of charges and complaints and admonitions, until the origins of the respective offenses were forgotten in the intervening recriminations. Then, as a warning to all who sought to endanger the "friendly relations" between the countries, a troop of French soldiers would be thrown first into one town, then into another. This process went on without an interval, and with merciless vigor, until the Venetian officials were literally distracted. Remonstrance was in vain: Bonaparte laughed at forms. Finally, when protest had proved unavailing, the harried oligarchy began at last to arm, and it was not long before forty thousand men, mostly Slavonic mercenaries, were enlisted under its banner. With his usual conciliatory blandness, Bonaparte next proposed to the senate a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive.

This was not a mere diplomatic move. Certain considerations might well incline the oligarchy to accept the plan. There was no love lost between the towns of the Venetian mainland and the city itself; for the aristocracy of the latter would write no names in its Golden Book except those of its own houses. The revolutionary movement had, moreover, already so heightened the discontent which had spread eastward from the Milanese, and was now prevalent in Brescia, Bergamo, and Peschiera, that these cities really favored Bonaparte, and longed to separate from Venice. Further than this, the Venetian senate had early in January been informed by its agents in Paris of a rumor that at the conclusion of peace Austria would indemnify herself with Venetian territory for the loss of the Milanese. The disquiet of the outlying cities on the borders of Lombardy was due to a desire for union with the Transpadane Republic. They little knew for what a different fate Bonaparte destined them. He was really holding that portion of the mainland in which they were situated as an indemnity for Austria. Venice was almost sure to lose them in any case, and he felt that if she refused the French alliance he could then, with less show of injustice, tender them and their territories to Francis, in exchange for Belgium. He offered, however, if the republic should accept his proposition, to assure the loyalty of its cities, provided only the Venetians would inscribe the chief families of the mainland in the Golden Book.

But in spite of such a suggestive warning, the senate of the commonwealth adhered to its policy of perfect neutrality. Bonaparte consented to this decision, but ordered it to disarm, agreeing in that event to control the liberals on the mainland, and to guarantee the Venetian territories, leaving behind troops enough both to secure those ends and to guard his own communications. If these should be tampered with, he warned the senate that the knell of Venetian independence would toll forthwith. No one can tell what would have been in store for the proud city if she had chosen the alternative, not of neutrality, but of an alliance with France. Bonaparte always made his plan in two ways, and it is probable that her ultimate fate would have been identical in either case.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PRELIMINARIES OF LEOBEN

Austrian Plans for the Last Italian Campaign—The Battle on the Tagliamento—Retreat of the Archduke Charles—Bonaparte's Proclamation to the Carinthians—Joubert Withdraws from the Tyrol—Bonaparte's "Philosophical" Letter—His Situation at Leoben—The Negotiations for Peace—Character of the Treaty—Bonaparte's Rude Diplomacy—French Successes on the Rhine—Plots of the Directory—The Uprising of Venetia—War with Venice.

THE Aulic Council at Vienna prepared for the Archduke Charles a modification of the same old plan, only this time the approach was down the Piave and the Tagliamento, rivers which rise among the grotesque Dolomites and in the Carnic Alps. They flow south like the Adige and the Brenta, but their valleys are wider where they open into the lowlands, and easier of access. The auxiliary force, under Lusignan, was now to the westward on the Piave, while the main force, under Charles, was waiting for reinforcements in the broad intervales on the upper reaches of the Tagliamento, through which ran the direct road to Vienna. This time the order of attack was exactly reversed, because Bonaparte, with his strengthened army of about seventy-five thousand men, resolved to take the offensive before the expected levies from the Austrian army of the Rhine should reach the camp of his foe. The campaign was not long, for there was no resistance from the inhabitants, as there would have been in the German Alps, among the Tyrolese, Bonaparte's embittered enemies; and the united force of Austria was far inferior to that of France. Joubert, with eighteen thousand men, was left to repress the Tyrol. Two small forces under Kilmaine and Victor were detailed to watch Venice and Rome respectively; but the general good order of Italy was intrusted to the native legions which Bonaparte had organized.

Masséna advanced up the Piave against Lusignan, captured his rear-guard, and drove him away northward beyond Belluno, while the Archduke, thus separated from his right, withdrew to guard the road into Carniola. Bonaparte, with his old celerity, reached the banks of the Tagliamento opposite the Austrian position on March sixteenth, long before he was expected. His troops had marched all night, but almost immediately they made a feint as if to force a crossing in the face of their enemy. The Austrians on the left bank awaited the onset in perfect order, and in dispositions of cavalry, artillery, and infantry admirably adapted to the ground. It seemed as if the first meeting of the two young generals would fall out to the advantage of Charles. But he was neither as wily nor as indefatigable as his enemy. The French drew back, apparently exhausted, and bivouacked as if for the night. The Austrians, expecting nothing further that day, and standing on the defensive, followed the example of their opponents. Two hours elapsed, when suddenly the whole French army rose like one man, and, falling into line without an instant's delay, rushed for the stream, which at that spot was swift but fordable, flowing between wide, low banks of gravel. The surprise was complete; the stream was crossed, and the Austrians had barely time to form when the French were upon them. They fought with gallantry for three hours until their flank was turned. They then drew off in an orderly retreat, abandoning many guns and losing some prisoners.

Masséna, waiting behind the intervening ridge for the signal, advanced at the first sound of cannon into the upper valley of the same stream, crossed it, and beset the passes of the Italian Alps, by which communication with the Austrian capital was quickest. Charles had nothing left, therefore, but to withdraw due eastward across the great divide of the Alps, where they bow toward the Adriatic, and pass into the valley of the Isonzo, behind that full and rushing stream, which he fondly hoped would stop the French pursuit. The frost, however, had bridged it in several places, and these were quickly found. Bernadotte and Sérurier stormed the fortress of Gradisca, and captured two thousand five hundred men, while Masséna seized the fort at the Chiusa Veneta, and, scattering a whole division of flying Austrians, captured five thousand with their stores and equipments. He then attacked and routed the enemy's guard on the Pontebba pass, captured Tarvis, and thus cut off their communication with the Puster valley, by which the Austrian detachment from the Rhine was to arrive.

Bonaparte wooed the stupefied Carinthians with his softly worded proclamations, and his advancing columns were unharassed by the peasantry while he pushed farther on, capturing Klagenfurt, and seizing both Triest and Fiume, the only harbors on the Austrian shore. He then returned with the main body of his troops, and, crossing the pass of Tarvis, entered Germany at Villach. "We are come," he said to the inhabitants, "not as enemies, but as friends, to end a terrible war imposed by England on a ministry bought with her gold." And the populace, listening to his siren voice, believed him. All this was accomplished before the end of March; and Charles, his army reduced to less than three fourths, was resting northward on the road to Vienna, beyond the river Mur, exhausted, and expecting daily that he would be compelled to a further retreat.

Joubert had not been so successful. According to instructions, he had pushed up the Adige as far as Brixen, into the heart of the hostile Tyrol. The Austrians had again called the mountaineers to arms, and a considerable force under Laudon was gathered to resist the invaders. It had been a general but most indefinite understanding between Bonaparte and the Directory that Moreau was again to cross the Rhine and advance once more, this time for a junction with Joubert to march against Vienna. But the directors, in an access of suspicion, had broken their word, and pleading their penury, had not taken a step toward fitting out the Army of the North. Moreau was therefore not within reach; he had not even crossed the Rhine. Consequently Joubert was in straits, for the whole country had now risen against him. It was with difficulty that he had advanced, and with serious loss that he fought one terrible battle after another; finally, however, he forced his way into the valley of the Drave, and marched down that river to join Bonaparte. This was regarded by the Austrians as a virtual repulse; both the Tyrol and Venice were jubilant, and the effects spread as far eastward as the Austrian provinces of the Adriatic. Triest and Fiume had not been garrisoned, and the Austrians occupied them once more; the Venetian senate organized a secret insurrection, which broke out simultaneously in many places, and was suppressed only after many of the French, some of them invalids in the hospitals, had been murdered.

On March thirty-first, Bonaparte, having received definite and official information that he could expect no immediate support from the Army of the Rhine, addressed from Klagenfurt to the Archduke what he called a "philosophical" letter, calling attention to the fact that it was England which had embroiled France and Austria, powers which had really no grievance one against the other. Would a prince, so far removed by lofty birth from the petty weaknesses of ministers and governments, not intervene as the savior of Germany to end the miseries of a useless war? "As far as I myself am concerned, if the communication I have the honor to be making should save the life of a single man, I should be prouder of that civic crown than of the sad renown which results from military success." At the same time Masséna was pressing forward into the valley of the Mur, across the passes of Neumarkt; and before the end of the week his seizure of St. Michael and Leoben had cut off the last hope of a junction between the forces of Charles and his expected reinforcements from the Rhine. Austria was carrying on her preparations for war with the same proud determination she had always shown, and Charles continued his disastrous hostilities with Masséna. But when Thugut received the "philosophical" letter from Bonaparte, which Charles had promptly forwarded to Vienna, the imperial cabinet did not hesitate, and plenipotentiaries were soon on their way to Leoben.

The situation of Bonaparte at Leoben was by no means what the position of the French forces within ninety miles of Vienna would seem to indicate. The revolutionary movement in Venetia, silently but effectually fostered by the French garrisons, had been successful in Bergamo, Brescia, and Salo. The senate, in despair, sent envoys to Bonaparte at Göritz. His reply was conciliatory, but he declared that he would do nothing unless the city of Venice should make the long-desired concession about inscriptions in the Golden Book. At the same time he demanded a monthly payment of a million francs in lieu of all requisitions on its territory. At Paris the Venetian ambassador had no better success, and with the news of Joubert's withdrawal from the Tyrol a terrible insurrection broke out, which sacrificed many French lives at Verona and elsewhere. Bonaparte's suggestions for the preliminaries of peace with Austria had been drawn up before the news of that event reached him: but with the Tyrol and Venice all aflame in his rear, and threatening his connections; with no prospect of assistance from Moreau in enforcing his demands; and with a growing hostility showing itself among the populations of the hereditary states of Austria into which he had penetrated, it was not wonderful that his original design was confirmed. "At Leoben," he once said, "I was playing twenty-one, and I had only twenty."

When, therefore, Merveldt and Gallo, the duly accredited plenipotentiaries of Austria, and General Bonaparte, representing the French republic but with no formal powers from its government, met in the castle of Göss at Leoben, they all knew that the situation of the French was very precarious indeed, and that the terms to be made could not be those dictated by a triumphant conqueror in the full tide of victory. Neither party had any scruples about violating the public law of Europe by the destruction of another nationality; but they needed some pretext. While they were in the opening stages of negotiation the pretext came; for on April ninth Bonaparte received news of the murders to which reference has been made, and of an engagement at Salo, provoked by the French, in which the Bergamask mountaineers had captured three hundred of the garrison, mostly Poles. This affair was only a little more serious than numerous other conflicts incident to partizan warfare which were daily occurring; but it was enough. With a feigned fury the French general addressed the Venetian senate as if their land were utterly irreconcilable, and demanded from them impossible acts of reparation. Junot was despatched to Venice with the message, and delivered it from the floor of the senate on April fifteenth, the very day on which his chief was concluding negotiations for the delivery of the Venetian mainland to Austria.

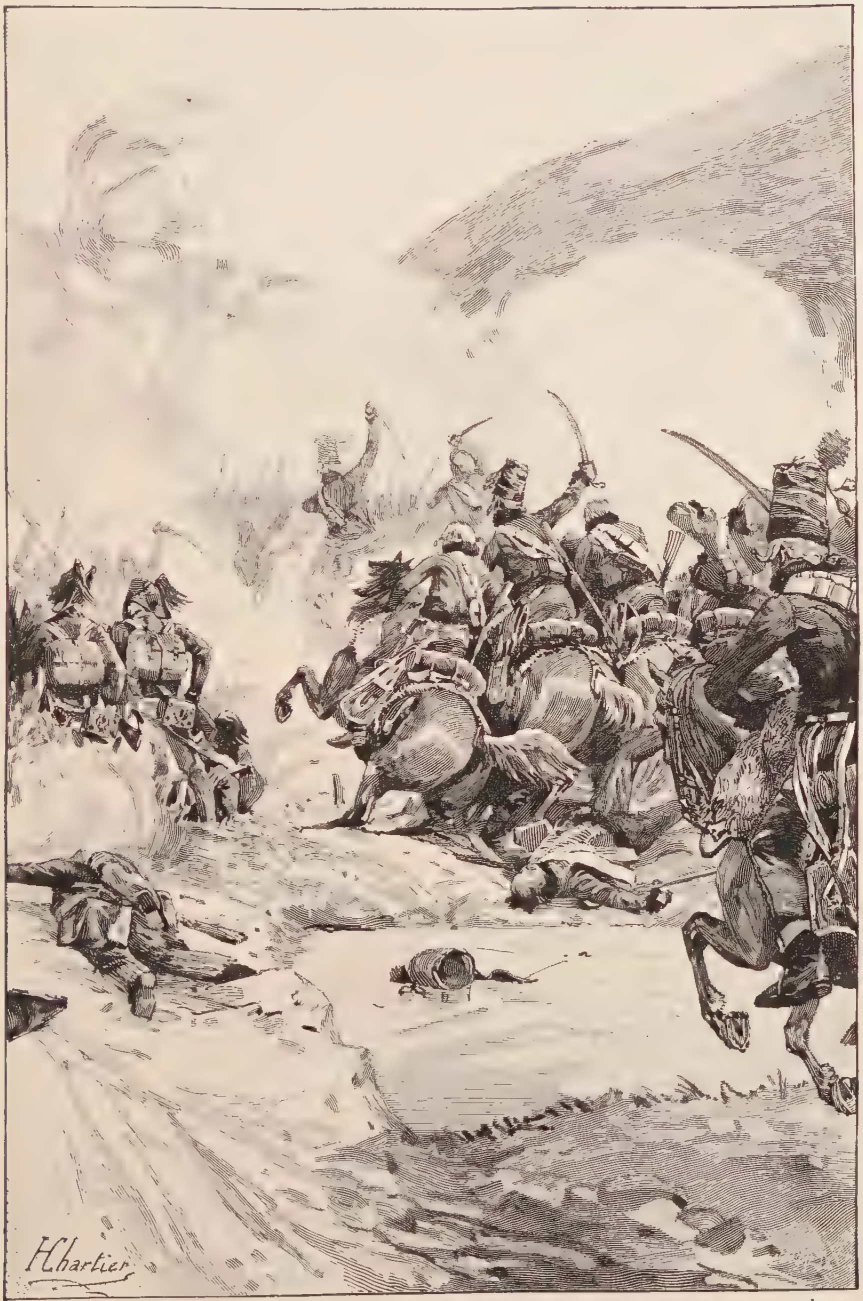
So strong had the peace party in Vienna become, and such was the terror of its inhabitants at seeing the court hide its treasures and prepare to fly into Hungary, that the plenipotentiaries could only accept the offer of Bonaparte, which they did with ill-concealed delight. There was but one point of difference, the grand duchy of Modena, which Francis for the honor of his house was determined to keep, if possible. With Tuscany, Modena, and the Venetian mainland all in their hands, the Austrian authorities felt that time would surely restore to them the lost Milanese. But Bonaparte was obdurate. On the eighteenth the preliminaries were closed and adopted. The Austrians solemnly declared at the time that, when the papers were to be exchanged formally, Bonaparte presented a copy which purported to be a counterpart of what had been mutually arranged. Essential differences were, however, almost immediately marked by the recipients, and when they announced their discovery with violent clamor, the cool, sarcastic general produced without remark another copy, which was found to be a correct reproduction of the preliminary terms agreed upon. According to these France was to have Belgium, with the "limits of France" as decreed by the laws of the republic, a purposely ambiguous expression. Austria obtained the longed-for mainland of Venice as far as the river Oglio, together with Istria and Dalmatia, the Venetian dependencies beyond the Adriatic, while Venice herself was to be nominally indemnified by the receipt of the three papal legations, Bologna, Ferrara, and the Romagna. Modena was to be united with Mantua, Reggio, and the Milanese into a great central republic, which would always be dependent on France, and was to be connected with her territory by way of Genoa. Some of the articles were secret, and all were subject to immaterial changes in the final negotiations for definitive peace, which were to be carried on later at Bern, chosen for the purpose as being a neutral city.

Bonaparte explained, in a letter to the Directory, that whatever occurred, the Papal States could never become an integral part of Venice, and would always be under French influences. His sincerity was no greater, as the event showed, concerning the very existence of Venice herself. The terms he had made were considered at Vienna most favorable, and there was great rejoicing in that capital. But it was significant that in the routine negotiations the old-school diplomatists had been sadly shocked by the behavior of their military antagonist, who, though a mere tyro in their art, was very hard to deal with. At the outset, for instance, they had proposed to incorporate, as the first article in the preliminaries, that for which the Directory had long been negotiating with Austria, a recognition of the French republic. "Strike that out," said Bonaparte. "The Republic is like the sun on the horizon—all the worse for him who will not see it." This was but a foretaste of ruder dealings which followed, and of still more violent breaches with tradition in the long negotiations which were to ensue over the definitive treaty.

The very day on which the signatures were affixed at Leoben, the Austrian arms were humbled by Hoche on the Rhine. Moreau had not been able to move for lack of a paltry sum which he was begging for, but could not obtain, from the Directory Hoche, chafing at similar delays, and anxious to atone for Jourdan's conduct of the previous year, finally set forth, and, crossing at Neuwied, advanced to Heddersdorf, where he attacked the Austrians, who had been weakened to strengthen the Archduke Charles. They were routed with a loss of six thousand prisoners. Another considerable force was nearly surrounded when a sudden stop was put to Hoche's career by the arrival of a courier from Leoben. In the Black Forest Desaix, having crossed the Rhine with Moreau's army below Strasburg, was likewise driving the Austrians before him. He too was similarly checked, and these brilliant achievements came all too late. No advantage was gained by them in the terms of peace, and the glory of humiliating Austria remained to Bonaparte.

Throughout all France there was considerable dissatisfaction with Bonaparte's moderation, and a feeling among extreme republicans, especially in the Directory, that he should have destroyed the Austrian monarchy. Larevellière and Rewbell were altogether of this opinion, and the corrupt Barras to a certain extent, for he had taken a bribe of six hundred thousand francs from the Venetian ambassador at Paris, to compel the repression by Bonaparte of the rebels on the mainland. The correspondence of various emissaries connected with this affair fell into the general's hands at Milan, and put the Directory more completely at his mercy than ever. On April nineteenth, however, he wrote as if in reply to such strictures as might be made: "If at the beginning of the campaign I had persisted in going to Turin, I never should have passed the Po; if I had persisted in going to Rome, I should have lost Milan; if I had persisted in going to Vienna, perhaps I should have overthrown the Republic." He well understood that fear would yield what despair might refuse. It was a matter of course that when the terms of Leoben reached Paris the Directory ratified them: even though they had been irregularly negotiated by an unauthorized agent, they separated England from Austria, and crushed the coalition. One thing, however, the directors notified Bonaparte he must not do; that was, to interfere further in the affairs of Venice. This order reached him on May eighth; but just a week before, Venice, as an independent state, had ceased to exist.

Accident and crafty prearrangement had combined to bring the affairs of that ancient commonwealth to such a crisis. The general insurrection and the fight at Salo had given a pretext for disposing of the



DRAWING MADE FOR THE CENTURY CO. ENGRAVED BY E. H. DEL'ORME

CAPTURE OF THE PASS OF TARVIS

FROM THE DRAWING BY H. CHARTIER

Venetian mainland; soon after, the inevitable results of French occupation afforded the opportunity for destroying the oligarchy altogether. The evacuation of Verona by the garrison of its former masters had been ordered as a part of the general disarmament of Italy. The Veronese were intensely, fiercely indignant on learning that they were to be transferred to a hated allegiance; and on April seventeenth, when a party appeared to reinforce the French troops already there, the citizens rose in a frenzy of indignation, and drove the hated invaders into the citadel. During the following days, three hundred of the French civilians in the town, all who had not been able to find refuge, were massacred; old and young, sick and well. At the same time a detachment of Austrians under Laudon came in from the Tyrol to join Fioravente, the Venetian general, and his Slavs. This of course increased the tumult, for the French began to bombard the city from the citadel. For a moment the combined besiegers, exaggerating the accounts of Joubert's withdrawal and of Moreau's failure to advance, hoped for ultimate success, and the overthrow of the French. But rumors from Leoben caused the Austrians to withdraw up the Adige, and a Lombard regiment came to the assistance of the French. The Venetian forces were captured, and the city was disarmed; so also were Peschiera, Castelnuovo, and many others which had made no resistance.

Two days after this furious outbreak of Veronese resentment,—an event which is known to the French as the Veronese Vespers,—occurred another, of vastly less importance in itself, but having perhaps even more value as cumulative evidence that the wound already inflicted by Bonaparte on the Venetian state was mortal. A French vessel, flying before two Austrian cruisers, appeared off the Lido, and anchored under the arsenal. It was contrary to immemorial custom for an armed vessel to enter the harbor of Venice, and the captain was ordered to weigh anchor. He refused. Thereupon, in stupid zeal, the guns of the Venetian forts opened on the ship. Many of the crew were killed, and the rest were thrown into prison. This was the final stroke, all that was necessary for the justification of Bonaparte's plans. An embassy from the senate had been with him at Gratz when the awful news from Verona came to his headquarters. He had then treated them harshly, demanding not only the liberation of every man confined for political reasons within their prison walls, but the surrender of their inquisitors as well. "I will have no more Inquisition, no more Senate; I shall be an Attila to Venice! . . . I want not your alliance nor your schemes; I mean to lay down the law." They left his presence with gloomy and accurate forebodings as to what was in those secret articles which had been executed at Leoben. When, two days later, came this news of further conflict with the French in Venice itself, the envoys were dismissed, without another audience, by a note which declared that its writer "could not receive them, dripping as they were with French blood." On May third, having advanced to Palma, Bonaparte declared war against Venice. In accordance with the general license of the age, hostilities had, however, already begun; for as early as April thirtieth the French and their Italian helpers had fortified the lowlands between the Venetian lagoons, and on May first the main army appeared at Fusina, the nearest point on the mainland to the city.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FALL OF VENICE

Feebleness of the Venetian Oligarchy—Its Overthrow—Bonaparte's Duplicity—Letters of Opposite Purport—Montebello—The Republican Court—England's Proposition for Peace—Plans of the Directory—General Clarke's Diplomatic Career—Conduct of Mme. Bonaparte—Bonaparte's Jealous Tenderness—His Wife's Social Conquests.

SINCE the days of Carthage no government like that of the Venetian oligarchy had existed on the earth. At its best it was dark and remorseless; with the disappearance of its vigor its despotism had become somewhat milder, but even yet no common man might draw the veil from its mysterious, irresponsible councils and live. A few hundred families administered the country as they did their private estates. All intelligence, all liberty, all personal independence, were repressed by such a system. The more enlightened Venetians of the mainland, many even in the city, feeling the influences of the time, had long been uneasy under their government, smoothly as it seemed to run in time of peace. Now that the earth was quaking under the march of Bonaparte's troops, that government was not only helpless, but in its panic it actually grew contemptible, displaying by its conduct how urgent was the necessity for a change. The senate had a powerful fleet, three thousand native troops, and eleven thousand mercenaries; but they struck only a single futile blow on their own account, permitting a rash captain to open fire from the gunboats against the French vanguard when it appeared. But immediately, as if in fear of their own temerity, they despatched an embassy to learn the will of the approaching general. That his dealings might be merciful, they tried the plan of Modena, and offered him a bribe of seven million francs; but, as in the case of Modena, he refused. Next day the Great Council having been summoned, it was determined by a nearly unanimous vote of the patricians—six hundred and ninety to twenty-one—that they would remodel their institutions on democratic lines. The pale and terrified Doge thought that in such a surrender lay the last hope of safety.

Not for a moment did Lallemant and Villetard, the two French agents, intermit their revolutionary agitation in the town. Disorders grew more frequent, while uncertainty both paralyzed and disintegrated the patrician party. A week later the government virtually abdicated. Two utter strangers appeared in a theatrical way at its doors, and suggested in writing to the Great Council that to appease the spirit of the times they should plant the liberty-tree on the Place of St. Mark, and speedily accede to all the propositions for liberalizing Venice which the popular temper seemed to demand. Such were the terror and disorganization of the aristocracy that instead of punishing the intrusion of the unknown reformers by death, according to the traditions of their merciless procedure, they took measures to carry out the suggestions made in a way as dark and significant as any of their own. The fleet was dismantled, and the army disbanded. By the end of the month the revolution was virtually accomplished; a rising of their supporters having been mistaken by the Great Council, in its pusillanimous terror, for a rebellion of their antagonists, they decreed the abolition of all existing institutions, and, after hastily organizing a provisional government, disbanded. Four thousand French soldiers occupied the town, and an ostensible treaty was made between the new republic of Venice and that of France.

This treaty was really nothing but a pronunciamento of Bonaparte. He decreed a general amnesty to all offenders except the commander of Fort Luco, who had recently fired on the French vessel. He also guaranteed the public debt, and promised to occupy the city only as long as the public order required it. By a series of secret articles Venice was to accept the stipulations of Leoben in regard to territory, pay an indemnity of six million francs, and furnish three ships of the line and two frigates, while, in pursuance of the general policy of the French republic, experts were to select twenty pictures from her galleries, and five hundred manuscripts from her libraries. Whatever was the understanding of those who signed these crushing conditions, the city was never again treated by any European power as an independent state. Soon afterward a French expedition was despatched to occupy her island possessions in the Levant. The arrangements had been carefully prepared during the very time when the provisional government believed itself to be paying the price of its new liberties. And earlier still, on May twenty-seventh, three days before the abdication of the aristocracy, Bonaparte had already offered to Austria the entire republic in its proposed form as an exchange for the German lands on the left bank of the Rhine.

Writing to the Directory on that day, he declared that Venice, which had been in a decline ever since the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope and the rise of Triest and Ancona, could with difficulty survive the blows just given her. "This miserable, cowardly people, unfit for liberty, and without land or water — it seems natural to me that we should hand them over to those who have received their mainland from us. We shall take all their ships, we shall despoil their arsenal, we shall remove all their cannon, we shall wreck their bank, we shall keep Corfu and Ancona for ourselves." On the twenty-sixth, only the day previous, a letter to his "friends" of the Venetian provisional government had assured them that he would do all in his power to confirm their liberties, and that he earnestly desired that Italy, "now covered with glory, and free from every foreign influence, should again appear on the world's stage, and assert among the great powers that station to which by nature, position, and destiny it was entitled." Ordinary minds cannot grasp the guile and daring which seem to have foreseen and prearranged all the conditions necessary to plans which for double-dealing transcended the conceptions of men even in that age of duplicity and selfishness.

Not far from Milan, on a gentle rise, stands the famous villa, or country-seat, of Montebello. Its windows command a scene of rare beauty: on one side, in the distance, the mighty Alps, with their peaks of never-melting ice and snow; on the other three, the almost voluptuous beauty of the fertile plains; while in the near foreground lies the great capital of Lombardy, with its splendid industries, its stores of art, and its crowded spires hoary with antiquity. Within easy reach are the exquisite scenes of an enchanted region — that of the Italian lakes. To this lordly residence Bonaparte withdrew. His summer's task was to be the pacification of Europe, and the consolidation of his own power in Italy, in France, and northward beyond the Alps. The two objects went hand in hand. From Austria, from Rome, from Naples, from Turin, from Parma, from Switzerland, and even from the minor German principalities whose fate hung on the rearrangement of German lands to be made by the Diet of the Empire, agents of every kind, both military and diplomatic, both secret and accredited, flocked to the seat of power. Expresses came and went in all directions, while humble suitors vied with one another in homage to the risen sun.

The uses of rigid etiquette were well understood by Bonaparte. He appreciated the dazzling power of ceremony, the fascination of condescension, and the influence of woman in the conduct of affairs. All such influences he lavished with a profusion which could have been conceived only by an Oriental imagination. As if to overpower the senses by an impressive contrast, and symbolize the triumph of that dominant Third Estate of which he claimed to be the champion against aristocrats, princes, kings, and emperors, the simplicity of the Revolution was personified and emphasized in his own person. His ostentatious frugality, his disdain for dress, his contempt for personal wealth and its outward signs, were all heightened by the setting which inclosed them, as a frame of brilliants often heightens the character in the portrait of a homely face.

Meantime England was not a passive spectator of events in Italy. At the close of 1796 Pitt's administration was in great straits, for the Tories who supported him were angered by his lack of success, while the Whig opposition was correspondingly jubilant and daily growing stronger. The navy had been able to preserve appearances, but that was all. There was urgent need for reform in tactics, in administration, and in equipment. France had made some progress in all these directions, and, in spite of English assistance, both the Vendean and the Chouan insurrections had, to all appearance, been utterly crushed. Subsequently a powerful expedition under Hoche was equipped and held in readiness to sail for Ireland, there to organize rebellion, and give England a draught from her own cup. It was clear that the Whigs would score a triumph at the coming elections if something were not done. Accordingly Pitt determined to open negotiations for peace with the Directory. As his agent he unwisely chose Malmesbury, a representative aristocrat, who had distinguished himself as a diplomatist in Holland by organizing the Orange party to sustain the Prussian arms against the rising democracy of that country. Moreover, the envoy was an ultra-conservative in his views of the French Revolution, and, believing that there was no room in western Europe for his own country and her great rival, thought there could be no peace until France was destroyed. Burke sneered that he had gone to Paris on his knees. He was received of course with distrust, and many believed his real errand to be the reorganization of a royalist party in France. Moreover, Delacroix, minister of foreign affairs, was a narrow, shallow, and conceited man, unable either to meet an adroit and experienced negotiator on his own ground, or to prepare new forms of diplomatic combat, as Bonaparte had done. The English proposition was that Great Britain would give up all the French colonial possessions she had seized during the war, provided the republic would abandon Belgium. It is well to recall in this connection that the navigation of the Scheldt has ever been an object of the highest importance to England: the establishment of a strong, hostile maritime power in harbors like those of the Netherlands would menace, if not destroy, the British carrying-trade with central and northern Europe. The reply of the Directory was that their fundamental law forbade the consideration of such a point; and when Malmesbury persisted in his offer, he was given forty-eight hours to leave the country. Hoche was at once despatched to Ireland; but wind and waves were adverse, and he returned to replace Jourdan in command of one of the Rhine armies, the latter having been disgraced for his failures in Germany.

The Directory, with an eye single to the consolidation of the republic, cared little for Lombardy, and much for Belgium with the Rhine frontier. The Austrian minister cared little for the distant provinces of the empire, and everything for a compact territorial consolidation. The successes of 1796 had secured to France treaties with Prussia, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, and the two circles of Swabia and Franconia, whereby these powers consented to abandon the control of all lands on the left bank of the Rhine hitherto belonging to them or to the Germanic body. As a consequence the goal of the Directory could be reached by Austria's consent, and Austria appeared to be willing. The only question was, Would France restore the Milanese? Carnot was emphatic in the expression of his opinion that she must, and his colleagues assented. Accordingly, Bonaparte was warned that no expectations of emancipation must be awakened in the Italian peoples. But such a warning was absurd. The directors, having been able neither to support their general with adequate reinforcements, nor to pay his troops, it had been only in the rôle of a liberator that Bonaparte was successful in cajoling and conquering Italy, in sustaining and arming his men, and in pouring treasures into Paris. It was for this reason that he saw himself compelled to overthrow Venice, and hold it as a substitute for Lombardy in the coming trade with Austria. But the directors either could not or would not at that time enter into his plans, and refused to comprehend the situation.

With doubtful good sense they therefore determined in November, 1796, to send an agent of their own direct to Vienna. They chose General Clarke, a man of honest purpose, but very moderate ability. He must of course have a previous understanding with Bonaparte, and to that end he journeyed by way of Italy. Being kindly welcomed, he was entirely befooled by his subtle host, who detained him with idle suggestions until after the fall of Mantua, when to his amazement he received instructions from Paris to make no proposition of any kind without Bonaparte's consent. Then followed the death of the Czarina Catherine, which left Austria with no ally, and all the subsequent events to the eve of Leoben. Thugut wanted no Jacobin agitator at Vienna, and informed Clarke that he must not come thither, but might reach a diplomatic understanding with the Austrian minister at Turin, if he could. He was thus comfortably banished from the seat of war during the closing scenes of the campaign, and to Bonaparte's satisfaction could not of course reach Leoben in time to conclude the preliminaries as the accredited agent of the republic. But he was henceforth to be associated with Bonaparte in arranging the final terms of peace; and to that end he came of course to Milan.

The court at Montebello was not a mere levee of men. There was as well an assemblage of brilliant women, of whom the presiding genius was Mme. Bonaparte. Love, doubt, decision, marriage, separation, had been the rapidly succeeding incidents of her connection with Bonaparte in Paris. Though she had made ardent professions of devotion to her husband, the marriage vow sat but lightly on her in the early days of their separation. Her husband appears to have been for a short time more constant, but, convinced of her fickleness, to have become as unfaithful as she. And yet the complexity of emotions—ambition, self-interest, and physical attraction—which seems to have been present in both, although in widely different degree, sustained something like genuine ardor in him, and an affection sincere enough often to awaken jealousy in her. The news of Bonaparte's successive victories in Italy made his wife a heroine in Paris. In all the salons of the capital, from that of the directors at the Luxembourg downward through those of her more aristocratic but less powerful acquaintances, she was fêted and caressed. As early as April, 1796, came the first summons of her husband to join him in Italy. Friends explained to her willing ears that it was not a French custom for the wives of generals to join the camp-train, and she refused. Resistance but served to rouse the passions of the young conqueror, and his fiery love-letters reached Paris by every courier. Josephine, however, remained unmoved; for the traditions of her admirers, to whom she showed them, made light of a conjugal affection such as that. She was flattered, but, as during the courtship, slightly frightened by such addresses.

In due time there were symptoms which appeared to be those of pregnancy. On receipt of this news the prospective father could not contain himself for joy. The letter which he sent has been preserved. It was written from Tortona, on June fifteenth, 1796. Life is but a vain show because at such an hour he is absent from her. His passion had clouded his faculties, but if she is in pain he will leave at any hazard for her side. Without appetite, and sleepless; without thought of friends, glory, or country, all the world is annihilated for him except herself. "I care for honor because you do, for victory because it gratifies you, otherwise I would have left all else to throw myself at your feet. Dear friend, be sure and say you are persuaded that I love you above all that can be imagined—persuaded that every moment of my time is consecrated to you; that never an hour passes without thought of you; that it never occurred to me to think of another woman; that they are all in my eyes without grace, without beauty, without wit; that you—you alone as I see you, as you are—could please and absorb all the faculties of my soul; that you have fathomed all its depths; that my heart has no fold unopened to you, no thoughts which are not attendant upon you; that my strength, my arms, my mind, are all yours; that my soul is in your form, and that the day you change, or the day you cease to live, will be that of my death; that nature, the earth, is lovely in my eyes only because you dwell within it. If you do not believe all this, if your soul is not persuaded, saturated, you distress me, you do not love me. Between those who love is a magnetic bond. You know that I could never see you with a lover, much less endure your having one: to see him and to tear out his heart would for me be one and the same thing; and then, could I, I would lay violent hands on your sacred person. . . . No, I would never dare, but I would leave a world where that which is most virtuous had deceived me. I am confident and proud of your love. Misfortunes are trials which mutually develop the strength of our passion. A child lovely as its mother is to see the light in your arms. Wretched man that I am, a single day would satisfy me! A thousand kisses on your eyes, on your lips. Adorable woman! what a power you have! I am sick with your disease: besides, I have a burning fever. Keep the courier but six hours, and let him return at once, bringing to me the darling letter of my queen."

At length, in June, when the first great victories had been won, when the symptoms of motherhood proved to be spurious and disappeared, when honors like those of a sovereign were awaiting her in Italy, Mme. Bonaparte decided to tear herself away from the circle of her friends in Paris, and to yield to the ever more urgent pleadings of her husband. Traveling under Junot's care, she reached Milan early in July, to find the general no longer an adventurer, but the successful dictator of a people, courted by princes and kings, adored by the masses, and the arbiter of nations. Rising, apparently without an effort, to the height of the occasion, she began and continued throughout the year to rival in her social conquests the victories of her husband in the field. Where he was Caius, she was Caia. High-born dames sought her favor, and nobles bowed low to win her support. At times she actually braved the dangers of insurrection and the battle-field. Her presence in their capital was used to soothe the exasperated Venetians. To gratify her spouse's ardor, she journeyed to many cities, and by a mild sympathy moderated somewhat the wild ambitions which the scenes and character of his successes awakened in his mind. The heroes and poets of Rome had moved upon that same stage. To his consort the new Cæsar unveiled the visions of his heated imagination, explained the sensations aroused in him by their shadowy presence, and unfolded his schemes of emulation. Of such purposes the court held during the summer at Montebello was but the natural outcome. Its historic influence was incalculable: on one hand, by the prestige it gave in negotiation to the central figure, and by the chance it afforded to fix and crystallize the indefinite visions of the hour; on the other, by rendering memorable the celebration of the national fête on July fourteenth, 1797, an event arranged for political purposes, and so dazzling as to fix in the army the intense and complete devotion to their leader which made possible the next epoch in his career.

The summer was a season of enforced idleness, outwardly and as far as international relations were concerned, but in reality Bonaparte was never more active nor more successful. In February the Bank of England had suspended specie payments, and in March the price of English consols was fifty-one, the lowest it ever reached. The battle of Cape St. Vincent, fought on February fourteenth, destroyed the Spanish naval power, and freed Great Britain from the fear of a combination between the French and Spanish fleets for an invasion. The effect on the English people was magical. Left without an ally by the preliminaries of Leoben, their government made overtures for peace, but when the effort failed they were not dismayed. It required the utmost diligence in the use of personal influence, on the part both of the French general and of his wife, to thwart the prestige of English naval victory among the European diplomats assembled at Montebello. But they succeeded, and the evidence was ultimately given not merely in great matters like the success of Fructidor or the peace of Campo Formio, but in small ones—such, for example, as the speedy liberation of Lafayette from his Austrian prison.

END OF VOLUME I.

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